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HORSE IN EARLY INDIAN ART

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HORSE IN EARLY INDIAN ART

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C O N T E N T S

	...	<u>P a g e</u>
Acknowledgement :	...	1 - 11
Introduction :	...	1 - 7
<u>Chapter I :</u>		
<u>Horse in proto-historic period.</u>	...	8 - 17
Origin of horse - evolution of poli-hippus - migration of horse from the place of its origin - presence of horse in the Middle East - presence of horse in pre- Aryan India.		
<u>Chapter II :</u>		
<u>Horse in the literary traditions.</u>	...	18 - 67
Horse in Vedic and post-Vedic literature - horse in Brahmanical literature - horse in Buddhist, Jaina and other miscellaneous literature.		
<u>Chapter III :</u>		
<u>Horse in early Indian art.</u>	...	68 - 130
Horse in early terracottas - horse in Mauryan monuments and in contemporary terracottas - horse in early Buddhist monuments - horse in Jaggayyapeta, Amaravati and in Nagarjunikonda - horse in western Indian caves - horse in Gandharan art - horse in Kushana- Mathura art - horse in Gupta art.		

	<u>P a g e</u>
<u>Appendix :</u>	... 131 - 155
Kinnara-Kinnari ^ Asvamukhi ^ Yakshi - Asva-vyala and Haya-machchhe (Jala-Turaga).	
 Bibliography :	 ... 156 - 167
 List of illustration	 ... 168 - 174

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Introduction

In the evolution of species, as it has been universally acknowledged, man appeared as the latest of all living creatures. Soon after his august appearance in the hoary past, his first task had been to adjust himself with the nature and other species. Initially, of course, he had unreasoning fear about other animals whom he watched carefully from the distance and in fact, he admired the strength and craftiness of some of the beasts. In his observation, there had been awe, admiration, sympathy and above all love for certain animals. Very soon, man could distinguish between ferocious as well as noble types. With his superior intellect man could tame the latter variety, specially those beasts which came down very near to the dwellings of men on their own accord. Of these, some animals supplied milk; the flesh of some was taken as food; a few animals were chosen for riding, hunting and chasing enemies while a limited number of animals were used for drawing the ploughshare. Horse had been one of these noble animals, the use of which came quite handy to man at a very early age. For its nobility, energy and power horse was very soon universally acknowledged as one of the most useful animals for the progress of human civilization. In its tremendous energy and power man discovered something unusual and something divine and as such all over the ancient world some sort of divine flavour came to be

attached to it by people evolving different civilizations. Although its arrival in Indian mainland took place somewhat recently yet our ancestors could easily recognise its great usefulness and thus attributed to it a position of high significance and allowed the same to be symbolic, theriomorphically, of some of their very important gods and goddesses.

According to the R̥gveda, time is the source and principle of the Sun the chariot is identical with Solar chariot, while the Sun is explicitly a steed (R̥gveda (VII.77.3). Similarly the Atharvaveda (XIX.53.1) observes: 'Kāla asvo vahati saptaraśmih tam ārohanti kavayo vipascitah' which means that the 'time, is a horse that drives with seven reins him the vibrant poets mount'. The Kātha Upanishad (3.4) takes horse as symbolising senses (indriyani hayānahuh etc.) and the chariot, the mind. These were some of the peculiar notions which early Indians attached to the animal horse. Such notions about horse was not typically Indian. There had been an universal attempt to praise horse and attach with it so many virtues which were very similar that the ancient Indians attributed to it.

To Plato, the horse signified in a good sense reason and opinion coursing through natural things¹. The Hebrew word for horse means 'to explain'². In Babylon, the

1. Bayley, Harold, The Lost Language of Symbolism, Vol.II, p.37.
2. Ibid., p.37.

horse was described as god 'Zu'³ and in Gypsy language the word 'Zi'⁴ means mind. The Arabs connected the word wisdom with horse's bridle and in Hindu philosophy 'manas', the mind is also compared to a birdle.⁵ The word 'mane' in Assyrian mythology is related to wisdom. The Anglo-Saxon word for mane is 'manu', Old High German is 'mana', and this word is obviously allied to the Sanskrit word 'manas', meaning the mind. The Gaulish word for horse was 'Epos', the eye of light. The Greek word is hippos (it comes from the Phoenician word 'hip', signifying parent of all) and the German 'L'ferd' i.e., 'op-ferde' which means 'eye of the fire resplendant'. It is from the source of 'equus', the Latin for horse, from which are derived the terms 'equity', 'equal' and 'equitable'.

In Greece, the Sun is accepted as the god pâr excellence of wisdom and intelligence. The Greeks attributed to him a chariot and four fiercy horses. 'Helios', i.e. the Sun was also conceived by the ancient Greeks as riding a chariot drawn by nine winged horses. He appears from the east and his charioteer is Hora.⁶ The Greek fertility goddess Demiter sometimes appeared with the head of a horse. The Sea-god, who in general signified Sciences was a horse and when they explained the birth of Sciences from intellectual

3. Pinches, Religion of Babylonia, p.103.
 4. Bayley, Harold, Op.cit., p.44.
 5. Temple Bible, Introduction to Proverbs, p.19.
 6. Larousse, Encyclopaedia of Mythology.
 See Chapter on Greek Mythology.

principles, they feigned a flying horse with burst hoof and from this appears a fountain where virgins who were the Sciences appeared.⁷ In Greek legend the horse was sacred to Poseidon who according to Homer was the Lord of Sea. He stands on a chariot driven by swift footed steed. Men offer sacrifice to the god in the form of a horse or bull. He is also known as the creator of horse and was worshipped as an equestrian god. He had a golden palace at the depth of the sea.⁸ These popular beliefs show that ancient Greeks attached the art of intellectual principles and the concept of fertility with horses. Tacitus records that white horses were looked after and maintained at public expenses in sacred groves and were never used for sacrifices. When the king as high priest yoked them in the sacred chariot, their neighing and shorting were carefully observed and the will of gods, therefrom, inferred, since it was firmly believed that the white horses knew the plans of the heavenly powers.⁹ The Druids, and also the Persian Magi practised divination by means of white horses¹⁰ - and in Japanese Shinto temples there is still maintained a sacred horse, generally an albino known as 'Jimme'. The story of white horse 'Al Borak' found in Mahammedan mythology is quite fascinating, each of whose stride was equal to the furthest region of human vision. In Babylonian mythology the horse was loved by the mother goddess

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7. Bayley, Harold, Op.cit., p.37.
8. Homer, Illiad, XIII, 21.
9. Kauffman, Northern Mythology, p.30.
10. Borlase, Art of Cornwall, p.144.

Ishtar and also by the Assyrian queen Semiramis (identified with Ishtar, Anaitis) who burned herself on a pyre in Babylonia for grief at the loss of a favourite horse.¹¹ Horse goddess Epona was very popular in Celtic Mythology. At one time the worship of Epona had spread from Spain to East Europe and from Italy to Great Britain. In Iceland men would believe that the horse goddess not only looked after them but also supervised those who were already dead. The horse 'Slipnir' of god Oden-Odin in Teutonic mythology was famous for its speed and uncomparable beauty. According to Joseph Cambell who made a comparative study of the role of animals in different religions observes that in the beginning the pig was taking the role of serpent as the sacred animal; after the pig the bull and after the bull the horse.¹² Such type of observation is noticed in the Taittiriya Sāṃhitā (1.1.4-6) where it is stated that Prajāpati first created Brāhmaṇa among men, goats among beast; then came Kshatriya and sheep; then arrived Vaisyas and cows and lastly appeared the Śūdras and horses. These observations may be explained in this way that the domestication and eventually the deification of horse had been made comparatively at a later stage of human civilization than the other animals. The horse is thus found to have symbolised intellectual principle, reason, various sciences, fertility, time and various other phenomenon. The

11. Frazer, J.G., The Golden Bough (The Scape-goat), Vol. IX, p.407n.

12. Cambell, Joseph, The Mask of God, Primitive Mythology, p.197.

animal that was initially a beast of burden (Rgveda VIII.46.8) and which was used for drawing the plough (Rgveda X.101.7) had also attained, by and large, an esteemed position in Indian religious hierarchy. Its great speed, indomitable energy and dashing vigour received immediate recognition from the early Indians who with the passing of time attached many virtues to it and turned it as one of the important zoomorphic deity. Religious recognition which the horse received from the early Indians had also inspired our early Indian artists to compose meaningful and fascinating themes in stone, terracotta and in colour with the horse as the pivotal character. Attempt has been made in the following pages of this dissertation to develop an idea how horse was brought into use first as a beast of burden, then as a symbol of high appreciation and finally the delineation of it in art.

The first chapter of this dissertation will be devoted to trace summerily the origin of horse, its physiological changes, the original homeland of eqqus (horse of modern look), migration of horse from its original homeland, presence of horse in ancient Near East, its entry into Indian mainland with Aryans and the presence of horse in pre-Aryan India, if any.

The second chapter deals entirely in the textual references to horses. References to the various aspects of

horses in Rgveda and other Vedas, in Brāhmanas, Upanishadas, Sūtras, Mahākāvyas, Purāṇas, Jain and Buddhist literature will be traced in this chapter. Besides religious texts, other historical texts will also be explored in this chapter to expose different aspects of horses related to the interest of this dissertation.

In the third chapter an attempt has been made to explore how horse was represented in early Indian art. This discussion will be based on a chronological sequence from the proto-historic phase to the Gupta period i.e. roughly the 6th century of Christian era. Stray references to post-Gupta horses have, however, been made on certain occasions when situation demanded to clarify some idea or to expose the continuity of a tradition beyond the limit of 6th century A.D.

Besides these three chapters there is an appendix which exclusively deals in the fantastic hybridity of horse with other forms in nature. This has called for a study of Kinnara-Kinnarī, Asva-mukhī yakshī, Asva-vyāla and Haya-machchha with special reference to their peculiar iconographies and their portrayals in ancient Indian stones, terracottas and in paintings.

Chapter - I

Horse in proto-historic period

After a prolonged research, Zoologists in general now agree that horse appeared in its earliest form somewhere near North America during the Eocene period.¹³ The earliest specimen of horse looked just like a Fox-terrier dog of today. This earliest species of horse has been designated as Eo-hippus. From Eo-hippus to the stage of Poli-hippus i.e. the equus of present look, there had been a long and peculiar process of evolution, so far as its physiological changes are concerned. During the inter-glacial desiccation which roughly corresponds to Neo-lithic period, by natural reasons, horse approached very near the human dwellings to be subsequently caught and gradually domesticated. Since its domestication, horse became an abiding friend of man and has been serving the cause of humanity in various ways. In movement and migration, in war and peace, in charging against enemies and in escape, in hunting and in other playful pursuits men received immense help from the horses from a hoary past.

The horse (equus) with its latest physiological traits is known to have evolved in the South Russian steppe.

13. Mukherji, Durgadas, Textbook of Zoology, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 292-293.

Possibly from this region horse migrated to the different parts of ancient world along with its tamers. Among many hypotheses evolved upto now regarding the original homeland of the Aryans, one group of scholars believes that the South Russian steppes had been the same. In this connection following observations of Dr. Raychowdhuri may be considered.

To him, it is abundantly clear that the horizon of early Indo-Aryans extended beyond the limits of India and encompassed the plateau of Iran and table land of Central Asia. Memories of ancestral connection with these territories had not been faded even in the epic period. But Persia, Bactria and Uttarakuru have not yielded the earliest historical traces of Indra worshipping Aryans. They were probably merely intermediary stages in the Aryan advancement towards India. For a still earlier home - we should perhaps turn to the regions near and beyond the Zargros mountain'.¹⁴

If the above notion is accepted then it may be surmised that it was the Aryans who domesticated horse in South Russian steppes. A reference in this connection may be made of the Pampelly expedition at Anau in Russian Turkistan which reveals that there might have been some ancestral tie between the Vedic Aryans and the horse sacrificing ancestors of Siberian Buriats. The Buriats who are Mongols dwelling in the vicinity of

14. Raychowdhuri, Hemachandra, Studies in Indian Antiquities, p.54.

lake Baikal still perpetuate ancient customs which resemble those of Vedic Aryans for they do not only practice cremation but also sacrifice horse.¹⁵ A burial custom among the Buriats was to kill the horse which carried the corpse to the ground for burial or for cremation with the belief that the (animal) sacrifice of the horse 'on a sacred hill inhabited by their gods and the Burkans (the master)' would 'secure fertility and property'. This rite closely resembled that of the Aryans known as 'Asvamedha' sacrifice which was performed by the Indian kings to proclaim themselves as monarchs and to ensure fertility in their kingdoms.

We have adequate references to trace the migration of the Aryans and horses from this early homeland. 'The Indo-Europeans, horse-folk par-excellence are those who have introduced according to the Hittite king Mursil that eastern animal into Hither Asia at the beginning of second millennium whence it passed on to Egypt and Crete and subsequently to Greek mainland.¹⁶ The Hittites are known to have ridden horses during the wars with their enemies. The horse became common in Babylone during the Kassite dynasty which followed Hammurabi and was there called 'ass of the east' a name that suggests whence the Kassites and Mitannian came

15. Mackenzie, D.A.,

Indian Myths and Legends,
P. XXXIII, see foot note.

16. Rosu, Arion(Bucharest),

The Trojan Horse in India,
vide Journal Asiatic Society,
Vol. XXIV, No.1, 1958.

'The horse loved by goddess Ishtar', 'whose cruelty' destined him (horse) the halter, the goad and the whip (i.e. indirect reference to the domestication of horses) must have been an interpolation in the story of the fatal love¹⁷ of the goddess after the Kassites' invasion to Babylonia. Wolfram von Soden and H. Kronasser have pointed out that the Indian horse-terms are present in the Akkadian texts of Nazi documents (cf. Wiener Leifschri fur die Kunde de Morgenlandes Vol.LIII, 1957, p.181 ff). Vittore Pisani thinks that in some adjectives for the horse --- babrunnu/paprunnu pinkerannu and Ziramannu/Zirrannu, the Sanskrit words¹⁸ such as babhru/pingala/and jira are recognisable. These words thus disclose obvious relationship between Aryans and the Akkadians. The word 'lu sussanu' signifying a horse trainer in the Assyrian records has been traced to an Indo-European etymology. The invasion of Egypt by the Hyksos 'Shepherd Kings' in the seventeenth century B.C. was part of the same far reaching migratory movement of peoples which brought Indo-European Hittites into Anatolia and the Greeks into Aegean. Their occupation of the Delta caused a second major break of thread of Egyptian dynastic history; but it left a legacy of material advantage, the effect of which soon became evident. New methods of warfare, including use of horse drawn chariots which had made their onslaught irresistible, were now adopted

17. Mackenzie, D.A.,
18.

Myths of Babylonia & Assyria, p.270.
Vide ABORI, Vol. 39, 1958, pp.133-34.

by the Pharaonic armies and opened for them in their turn
a period of extensive foreign conquests.¹⁹

According Langdon, the ideogram for horse on a tablet from Jamdet Nasr establishes its existence in the Middle East long before 3000 B.C. That the domesticated horse was known about 3000 B.C. in Susa and Mesopotemia has been proved by de Macquenam and Frankfort and Preusser though some like Wolley, Child and Hilzheimer consider the bones from Tell Asmer as those of Onager. The horse, however, was not the original inhabitant of Mesopotemia but received the significant title 'ass of the mountains' on its first appearance in Jamdet Nasr.²⁰

Aryans are known to have entered India roughly somewhere in the 14th - 15th century B.C. Definite traces for horses have been discovered along in those routes which were followed by the Aryans before entering Indian mainland. The archives at Boghaz Koy yielded a work in four tablets by a Mitannian called Kikkuli on the training and acclimatisation of horses. Kikkuli is also known to have worshipped Aryan gods under Vedic names.²¹ The Sialk culture of Northern Persia has yielded bones of horses. Two bone objects recently found at Susa are dated as belonging to Aqwan dynasty and as such belonged to c. 3000 B.C. Horse was possibly known also

19. Lloyd, Seton, The Art of the Ancient Near East,
Part V, p.151.
20. Singh, S.D., Ancient Indian Warfare, p.26.
21. Singh, S.D., ibid., p.55.

in Elam in c.3000 B.C.²² According to another scholar the basin of Tarim river in the plateau of Iran seems to have been the homeland both of the ancient Asiatic type of horse and of the wild ass, the latter fact being responsible for the ancient Indian naming the region as Kharoṣṭra land. There has been, however, sharp differences of opinion among the scholars that horse entered India alongwith the Aryans and it was tamed by them as well. Marshall, Prasad, Vats, Mode, Hancer and others rule out the possibility of the occurrence of horse in proto-historic India and take the animal as onager or wild ass, while Mackey, Piggott, Wheeler among others, hold the contrary view. There is, however, complete agreement among scholars regarding the bones of horse found near the surface at Mahenjodaro.²³ The problem whether horse existed before the advancement of Aryans in India or it entered India along with the Aryans may also be tackled in the light of philology and archaeology.

Philologically some words connected with horse are referred to as non-Aryan. Przyluski has argued that names 'Satvant', 'Satvata' and 'Nāsatya' have a non-Aryan connection which appear in the modern Munda languages in the form of

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22. Mackey, E.J.H., Further Excavations at Mahenjodaro, Vol.I, pp. 289-290.
23. Pusalkar, A.D., Horse in Proto-historic India, Munshi Indological Felicitation Volume, Bharatitya Vidya Bhavan, Vol.XX, XXI, Bombay, 1963, p. 257 ff.

'sâdam', meaning horse.²⁴ Some breed of the horse or pony (sâda as in Skt. Sâdin = rider) must have been related to²⁵ the Austric speaking pre-Aryan peoples of India. Thus we find that attempts were made by scholars to prove that pre-Aryan settlers in India had association with horse as such. Bones of domesticated horse were unearthed at Mahenjodaro, a foot and ten inches beneath the surface. Some teeth of domesticated horse had also been discovered at Ranaghundai²⁶ in the Zhob valley of Baluchistan in the deposit of R.G.I. The evidence of R.G.I., however, suggests that they were nomadic horses and were ridden by herdsmen who used the site as camping ground. In this connection it may be mentioned that horse was ridden first and were yoked later in the story of its domestication. Bones of the domesticated ass, too, were found at Harappa, at varying depths. It is likely enough that camel, horse and ass were in fact all a familiar feature of Indus caravans.²⁷ Sir John Marshall long ago reported the existence of horse bones of Equidae family i.e. Equus Caballas²⁸ in Mahenjodaro. Sir John, further, goes to say that 'as

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| 24. Przyluski, | Hippokoura et Satakarni JRAS, 1929 ff. Satavata, Satavata and Masetya, I.H.Q. IX, pp. 88-91. |
| 25. Chatterjee, S.K., | Vedic Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, p. 150. cf. also Polyglotism in Indo-Aryan, 7th Oriental Conference, pp. 183-185. |
| 26. Ross, E.J., | A Chalcolithic Site in Northern Baluchistan Journal Near Eastern Studies, Vol.4, Chicago, 1946, p. 296. |
| 27. Wheeler, Sir Mortimer, | The Indus Valley Civilization Second Edition, Cambridge History of India, A supplementary volume, p. 65. |
| 28. Marshall, Sir John, | Mohenjodaro and Indus Valley Civilization, Vol.II, p.653, Pl.CLXII, fig. 9. |

the breed is concerned, this is primarily the animal that might be expected at Mahenjodaro. On the other hand, the absence of any representation of a horse among many other animals portrayed here and at Harappa points to the bones of Equus Caballas which were found, near the surface, being of a later date. This negative argument, however, is not conclusive'.²⁹ Though extremely rare, the figures of horse in Chalco-lithic phase of Indian culture are not altogether unknown. Long ago E.J.H. Mackey tentatively identified a model animal without tail and ears, as a horse.³⁰ Sir Aurel Stein found in his own endeavour a small fragment of a painted terracotta ware from Gushanak hill which is represented with the figure of a horse with rider.³¹ Sir Aurel Stein during his explorations in Baluchistan also discovered two little terracottas. One of these is from Perianoghundai in Zhob district and it represents a horse; it was found in association with ceramic wares characteristic of Chalco-lithic age.³² The second fragment of a coarsely made terracotta comes from Zayak and seems to represent the head of a horse.³³ In this

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29. Marshall, Sir John, Mahenjodaro and Indus Valley Civilization, Vol.I, p.28.
Reprinted in 1973 by Indological Book House, Delhi and Varanasi.
30. Mackey, E.J.H., Op.cit., Pl. LXXVIII, II.
31. MASI, p.118, Pl. XXII.
32. Stein, Sir Aurel, Archaeological Tour in Waziristan and Northern Baluchistan, MASI, No.37, 1929, p.38, Pl. VII (P.W. 6).
33. Stein, Sir Aurel, An Archaeological Tour in Gedrosia, MASI, No.43, 1931, p.34, Pl.I (Z.W. 5).

connection a reference may be made of a terracotta horse, dated in c.2500 B.C. which hails from Sari-Dheri, a small village north of Charsada, on the road to Hoti-Mardan. This terracotta horse alongwith other objects were obtained by Dr. B.Rowland, Junior at the site in 1936 who was then³⁴ attached to Fogg Art Museum. Some more lights about the existence of horse in proto-historic period have been thrown by the Indian excavators who discovered terracotta horses and a painted pot sherd in the places where Harappan culture is supposed to have extended. Mr. S.R.Rao while excavating at a Harappan site at Lothal (in Saragwal, Ahmedabad)³⁵ discovered three terracotta horses. These terracotta horses belong to the period II and are thus regarded to-have arrived there with the new elements in Lothal site. 'Who these new people were, we do not know' says Dr. H.D.Sankalia.³⁶ He further says that 'nor we know whether the contact with Sind was stopped, because in the latter itself, the Harappan civilization was being destroyed by nature and man'. The occurrence of yet another terracotta figure of a horse like animal, with thick, short tail, is un-mistakably that of this animal, whereas the face and head are very much like it, is very significant. It is found from the mature Harappan

34. Rowland, B.(Junior), A Neglected Treasure Trove at the Gates of India, Asia, January, 1939, p.48, fig.12 also The Art of Greater India Exhibition Catalogue, Los Angeles County Museum, March 1 - April 16, 1950, fig.5.
35. Vide Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1959-60, p.18, Pl. XV.E.
36. Sankalia, H.D., Pre-history and Proto-history of India and Pakistan, p.169.

deposits of period I, and this discovery has led Dr. Sankalia to conclude that 'then all arguments regarding the authorship of the civilization based on the existence and non-existence of horse in the Indus valley civilization will have to be revised, unless of course, the animal is not a horse but Onager - wild ass which is still surviving in the Little Rann of Kutch and North-west Saurashtra'.³⁷ The horse may also be seen in a small terracotta fragment and a stylised painting on a pottery from Rangpur. In Rangpur the design depict a horse's head with mane. And lastly a reference may be made to a small terracotta horse discovered by Mr. V.S.Wakankar from Kayatha in Ujjain which according to the learned scholar belongs to the proto-historic phase. This little but very interesting terracotta is now in the collection of Vikram University Museum at Ujjain. As regards Dr. Chatterji's claim that the Aryans were the first tamers of horse perhaps does not stand after these discoveries.³⁸ There is, however, no evidence to prove the use of horse in warfare in pre-Aryan India. There might have been stray and sporadic experiments in this period, but the hay day of the war horse dawned definitely with the age of the Rgveda.

37. Sankalia, H.D.,
38. Pati, Jadunath,

Op.cit., p.167.
Vide Indian Historical Quarterly,
Vol.IV, Dec., 1928, No.4, p.681.

Chapter - II

Horse in the literary traditions

Horse in Vedic and post-Vedic literature :

Macdonell and Keith evolved a confused notion by remarking that the riding was known in the Vedic period but it was unsuited to Vedic ideas and never practised in battle.³⁹ There are however, ample references to prove that the Vedic Aryans used horse against their enemies without any prejudice. Mention of fighting hand to hand being on horse back is to be found referred clearly in a hymn of the Rgveda (I.8.2) which reads as follows: 'ni yena mustihatya ni vrtra[^] r[^]unadha[^] mahai tvotaso nyarvata[^]'. The word 'arvata' (which literally means horse, is explained by Sayana as fighting on horse back. The 'arvatam' i.e. the ridden horse has also been referred to in the Rgveda (I.163-9, Vajasesniya Samhita[^] XXIX.20 and in Taittiriya Samhita[^] IV.6.7.4). The Rgveda (X.92.11) has also mention of the word 'caturanga'. The word is also found mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana (XII.3.2.2). The reference of the four fold classification of army with elephants, horses, chariots and infantry (hastyasvarathapadatayah) explains the word caturanga without any ambiguity (Sama[^]

39. Macdonell and Keith,

Vedic Index II, p.444
cf. also Macdonell in J.R.A.S. 1893,
p.437, n.6.

Vidhāna Brāhmaṇa, III.6.11). Use of cavalry in war is again proved by some hymns in the R̥gveda addressed to Maruts (R̥gveda V.61.1). Horsemen are also mentioned in military context in another R̥gvedic hymn (VI.47.31) which is also referred in the later Sāṃhitās (A.V. VI.126.3, T.S. IV.6.6.7, V.S. XXX.57). The word 'asviva' in the R̥gveda II.27.16 means a horseman. 'Akra' in several passages of the R̥gveda means according to Roth a riding horse (cf. R̥gveda I.147.7., I.189.7., III.1.12., IV.6.3., X.77.2., and also ZDMG 48.118). The use of the term 'sāda' or 'sādas' in the R̥gveda I.162.17 and V.61.2 makes it clear that 'Sādinah' in the Atharvaveda XI.10.24 must mean, in accordance with the commentary, 'asvārudha' i.e., mounted on horse. Dr. Coomaraswamy, who had very carefully studied the R̥gveda mentioned that riding was quite well known in the R̥gveda and the Atharvaveda.⁴⁰ R̥gveda I.163.2 refers to Indra mounting a horse ... 'adhyatisthat ... asvam' etc. The R̥gveda VIII.6.36 again mentions riding of horse by Lord Indra - 'O Indra, come thou to us from the distant region, riding on thy two handsome horses and drink this soma ('a no yāhi paravato harivyam, haryātabhyam imāṃ indrasutam piva' etc.). The word 'asvaparnah' in the R̥gveda VI.47.31 ^{signifies} refers to riding on fleet horses. Horse riding had also been mentioned in a round about way when the R̥gveda says that Mitra and Varuna

40. Coomaraswamy, A.K., See JAOS, Vol.62, 1942, pp. 139-140.

travel on clouds as people ride on trained horses. In this connection, references to horse-race can also be traced in the Rgveda. Rgvedic reference to the word 'āji' (IV.24.8., X.156.1) means a race course; the word 'kāsthā' (Rgveda VIII. 80.8) is also considered to mean the same thing. The word 'ājikrt' (VIII.53.6) means race marker and the word 'ājipati' in the Rgveda (VIII.53.6) means the race lord. The Rgveda uses different adjectives to qualify the name of the horses. The word 'atya' and 'sapti' mean the runner horse, the term 'arvant' denotes a swift horse, 'vāji' stands for a strong horse, while 'haya' explains a speeding horse.⁴¹ A few lines of the Rgveda (IV.3.39-40) are found devoted to the praise of the war horse Dadhikrā. In the light of the above lines it may be concluded that the horse riding had been a favourite pastime of the Vedic Aryans and they also used horses in war against their enemies.

The Rgveda informs us about a few divine horses, of which, Dadhikrā is one (see Rgveda IV.38-40). Dadhikrā is characteristically a steed and in the Nighantū (1.14) the word is used as a synonym for horse. It is very swift and is regarded as vanquisher of chariots (rathātura) and

41. Das, Abinas Chandra, Rg Vedic India, pp.226-227.

is known to speed like wind. It is winged⁴² and is referred to as bird like; its wings are compared to those of a bird and of a speeding eagle. In a Rgvedic passage it is spoken of as swan (hamsa), dwelling in light. Dadhikra defeats the Dasyus and is victorious. The steed Dadhikravan is regularly invoked in the Rgveda with Ushas[^] nearly as often with Agni, less frequently with the Asvins[^] and Surya[^], sometimes with other divinities also but Dadhikra[^] is invoked⁴³ first.

The etymological meaning of the word Dadhikra is uncertain. The second part of the compound may be a by form of the root 'kr', 'to scatter' and the word would then mean 'scattering cuddled milk' in allusion to the dew or rime appearing at sun-rise according to Roth and Grassmann. These scholars think that Dadhikra[^] represents in the form of a steed, the circling ball of the Sun. The view is supported by the fact that the deity with whom Dadhikra[^] is closely

42. The idea of attaching wings in the body of horse is possibly a foreign contribution. It originally evolved in Egypt and travelled India through the Assyrian contact. In this connection following observation is worth noticing.

That the Assyrian 'independently developed the idea of fixing wings to their deities, is a thing to be thought of. Probably the conception of Horus with wings and beaks slowly crept into the body of their theology and the Assyrians as the distinctive parts of divinity put the appendage of wings to all their objects of worship. For instance, they have winged lion, the winged horse, the beak headed winged man etc.', See Dissertation on Painting by Mahendra Nath Dutta, Edited by B.K.Chatterjee, Calcutta, 1922.

43. Macdonell, A.A., The Vedic Mythology, pp.147-150.

connected is Ushas[^], that the Sun is often conceived as a steed or bird and that he is sometimes regarded as war-like. The statement that Dadhikra[^] was given by Mitra and Varuna might be connected with the notion that the Sun formed the eyes of those deities. Dr. Coomaraswamy points out in connection with Rgveda IV.40.4 as cited in TS. I.7.8.3 'that Dadhikra[^], the Sun is not a chariot horse.⁴⁴ In our text 'kratu' after which (anu) the horse is effective to the riders i.e., the person in the Sun, he whom all men see with mind rather than that of the Sun himself, who all men see with the eye'. Our learned scholar illustrates his point by referring to the Buddhist sculptures of the 'abhinikkhamana' (Great Departure of Gautama) where the presence of Bodhisattva on the back of the saddled and riderless horse is felt but not seen. Ludwig Fischel, Bradke and Oldenburg, however, agreed with the opinion that Dadhikra[^] was not a deity but an actual horse, famous as a racer or charger which received divine honours.

/ Dadhikra[^] is allied to the Vedic concept of Dadhya^{^~} in name and nature as well. Dadhya^{^~} is referred to as having a horse's head. He is the son of Atharvan, the fire priest himself, is a mighty rsi and begetter of the god of fire as well. In the Rgveda his bones are mentioned in

44. Coomaraswamy, Dr. A.K., J.A.O.S. 62, p.139.

connection with the Indra myth (I.84). Indra with the bones of Dadhya^{^~}ncas imperturbably defeated the nine times ninety enemies. When seeking the horse-head hidden in the mountains, he found it in Saryanavat (Rgveda I.116.12, I.117.22., I.119.9., X.48.10).

As long as the Asuras saw Dadhya^{^~}ncas, the son of Atharvan, still alive, they remained in the background but when he had gone to heaven the earth became filled with Asuras. And because Indra could not conquer them, he sought for the rsi and learned that he had gone to heaven. Thereupon, he asked the inhabitants of this earth: 'did not part of his body remain somewhere'. They replied 'there still is horse's head with which he revealed the secret of the mead to the Asvins. We do not know, however where it is'. Indra answered, 'seek it'. They sought and found the horse's head in the lake Saryanavat behind Kurukshetra and brought it to Indra. It was with this head that Indra defeated the Asuras. Thus goes the commentary of an obscure passage made by Sayana from the Rgveda.⁴⁵ The betrayal of Dadhya^{^~}ncas is also mentioned elsewhere in Vedic literature, the most circumstantial version of the story being given in the Satapatha Brahmana XIV.1.1.⁴⁶

45. Geldner,

46. Bosch, F.D.K.,

Der Rigveda, 1923, p.97
cf. H.Oertel JAOS, 18, p.16 39.
Selected Studies in Indonesian
Archaeology. The Hague, 1961
see Ch. on The God with Horse's
head.

The wise Dadhya[~]ncā came into the possession of the secret knowledge of the mead i.e. the 'madhuvidyā[^]'. Indra threatens him with decapitation if he gives the secret away to anybody. The two Asvins having heard the threat tell Dadhya[~]ncā^{that} they want to become his disciples in order to be taught the secret. When Dadhya[~]ncā fearing Indra's vengeance raises objections, the Asvins had worked out a stratagem. They propose to cut off Dadhya[~]ncā's head and after having put it away, they would replace a horse head on his trunk. As soon as he would have told them the secret, Indra would cut off the horse head and then they would replace his proper head on his trunk. Dadhya[~]ncā consents to this proposal and in this way everything happened to the satisfaction of them all.

The above stories have enriched Dadhya[~]ncā's personality with some striking features. He wears a horse's head by means of which he discloses the secret of 'madhu' (madhuvidyā[^], see Brhadāra[^]nyaka Upani[^]ṣhad II.5.2., Satapatha Brahmana IV.1.5.8, Eggl[^]ing S.B.E. XII intr. XXXIV). To complete the personality of Dadhya[~]ncā it must be mentioned that the Satapatha Brāh[^]mana VI.4.2.3. identifies him with Vāc[^], the goddess of speech and wisdom. The words of Satapatha Brāh[^]mana do not possibly identify the goddess Vāc[^] with Dadhya[~]ncā himself but with his voice, the neighing of the horses head through which the secret wisdom is divulged. Albrecht Weber noticed the Vedic horse headed seer is an alter

ego of Purusha-Nārāyaṇa, who in the epic,⁴⁷ is provided with the head of a horse, by means of which he discloses the secret wisdom, just like Dadhyaṇca. In order to bring out the significance of the intrinsic identity of Vedic Dadhyaṇca and Purusha-Nārāyaṇa, the Vedic proto-type of Purusha Prajāpati, some observations on the role of Prajāpati become obviously necessary.

Prajāpati in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa appeared as a white horse (VII.3.2.14). Once fire god Agni fled and had hidden in water and Prajāpati in the shape of a horse tracked him down and detected him. It is specially as a victim, as the substance out of which the universe was created, that Prajāpati is represented in the shape of a horse. According to the Brāhmaṇas, the sacrificial horse which is slaughtered in the 'asvamedha', that masterpiece and high light of Brāhmonical knowledge is owned by Prajāpati himself (Taittiriya Brahmana III.9.17.4., Egging S.B.E. XLIV. P.XIII). So it is no wonder that in a cosmogonical myth, the sacrificial horse, just like the supreme deity, figures as the substance out of which the creation came forth; the twilight is its head, the Sun is its eye, the wind is its breath and so on (Satapatha Brāhmaṇa X.6.4.1).

Prajāpati and Dadhyaṇca show their close relationship

47. Weber, Albrecht, Indische Studien, I, pp.290-384.

in so far as the latter's voice is Vac and the former is named as Vācaspati. Moreover, the motive for self sacrifice is common between the two. In the Epic story of Dadhici[^] who sacrifices his body for the making of vajra from his bones to be possible, finds a striking parallel story in one of the many stories of creation occurring in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Prajāpati sacrificed his body as usual and the rajjudala tree sprang from the flegm of his nose, the pitudaru from the fluid of his eyes, the bilva tree from his marrow and khadira tree (Acacia catechu) from his bones. It is from the hard wood of this Khadira that a vajra like weapon is said have been made.⁴⁸ Another interesting story runs parallel to that of Dadhyaṅca's[^] myth in the tale of Aurva in the Ādiparva 180 of the Mahābhārata. In consequence of a deadly feud between the Brāhmins and the Kshatriyas a wholesale massacre of the former takes place. When the Kshatriyas unscrupulously also kill the unborn Brāhmin children in their mother's womb, a pregnant Bhṛgu mother, in mortal fear flees to Himavat mountain after having hidden the embryo in her thigh. She is betrayed, but when the Kshatriyas are on the point of killing the unborn child it comes out of the thigh, radiating such a blinding light that Kshatriyas are struck blind. The child is named Aurva (after 'ūru'[^] i.e. thigh). As an adult, he set himself in the

48. Bosch, F.D.K., Op.cit.

task of avenging the murder of his kin folks. Aurva performs the most severe tapas but by the spirit of his ancestors, he is moved to renounce his revenge and to throw his fury fire into the sea. There it takes the shape of a horse's head which spits fire from its mouth and swallows the water of the ocean. The fire is called vâdavâgni, the mare's fire and considered to be an 'avatâra' of Vishnu Narâyana.

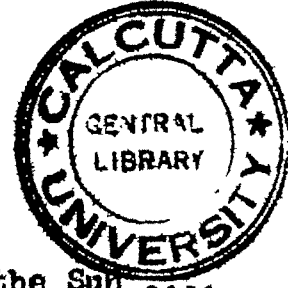
Closely related to Dadhikrâ is Târksya whose name is mentioned twice in the Rgveda. One late hymn consisting of three stanzas is devoted to his praise. He is there described as a god impelled mighty steed (vâjin), a vanquisher of chariots, swift and speeding to the battle. He is invoked as a gift of Indra ... That he was primarily conceived as a steed is shown by the epithet 'aristâṇemi' whose feller is intact. In one or two later vedic texts Târksya, is however, referred to as a bird and in the epic and subsequent literature, he is identical with the swift bird Garuda. It seems on the whole probable that Târksya originally represented the Sun in the form of a divine steed. The word seems to be derived from Trksi, the name of a man, with the patronymic Trâsadâsyava, once mentioned in the Rgveda. This derivation leads to believe that Târksya was an actual race horse (like Dadhikrâ) belonging to Trksi of the family of Trâsadasyu.

The Rgveda refers to another white horse (Sveta)

which the Asvins are said to have brought from Pedu and which is, therefore, called Paidava. He is praiseworthy and is to be invoked by men, like Bhaga. He is compared with Indra and is called dragon slayer (shihan), an epithet otherwise peculiar to Indra. He is a conqueror, invincible in battles, seeking heaven. Here again the evidence, as far as it goes, appears to have favoured the interpretation of the steed of Pedu as symbolical of Sun.⁴⁹

The word 'etasa' in Rgveda probably meant swift; the word more frequently signifies a steed in the Rgveda. In plural it signifies the horses of the Sun. It occurs about a dozen times as a proper name in the singular connected with the Sun, often with reference to the wheel of the Sun. Savitr is the steed (Etasa) who measured out all the terrestrial region. The swift god Etasa draws the bright form of the Sun. Yoked to the pole, Etasa moves the wheel of the Sun; he is also mentioned to have brought the wheel of the Sun. Indra helped Etasa contending in a race with Sūrya. It may be gathered from stray references to this mythical contest that Etasa being at first behind, takes up the wheel of the Sun; he has now gained the lead and in the end Sūrya seems to concede to him the place of honour before his own car.⁵⁰

49. Macdonell, A.A., Vedic Mythology, pp.158-159.
50. Macdonell, A.A., Ibid., pp.158-159.



Time is the source and principle of the Sun
the chariot is essentially identical with solar chariot as described elsewhere, while the Sun is explicitly a steed in Rgveda (VIII.77.3) as is Prajâpati elsewhere. The Sun in the Rgveda is thought of as riding a chariot having one or more, often seven wheels. It is possible to combine images and think of the god as a horse in a horse drawn chariot or as a wheel in a wheeled vehicle. Coomaraswamy refers to the illustration of Ferrer of Indian saddled Sun horse borne on four wheeled car (Ferrer, *Les chars cultuels pre historiques et leurs survivances aux epoques historiques* fig.33.3.

⁵¹
Paris, 1952) that the horse is symbolical of the Sun is indicated by a passage of the Rgveda in which Dawn is said to lead a white steed. In a particular form of Soma ritual ⁵² the horse also appears to be symbolical of the Sun.

The number of horses in relation to the Sun in the Rgveda varies from one, five, six, seven or even thousand (Rgveda I.50; V.62; VI.64). The number seven is definitely associated with the steeds of Sûrya for the first time in a late text, i.e., the Taittirîya Brâhmana, where, other passages also occur which say that there is only one horse though it bears seven names (eko haya vahati sapta nama). The Taittirîya Aranyaka explains that there were seven Sûryas and not merely

51. Coomaraswamy, A.K., JAOS, Vol.62, 1942, pp.139-140.
52. Macdonell, A.A., Op.cit.

seven steeds of ⁵³Sūrya and attempts various explanations which are all symbolical. In another Vedic reference (Rgveda V.45) it is said that 'He (⁵⁴Sūrya) has a car which is drawn by one steed or by an indefinite number of steeds or by mares or by seven horses or by mares called Haritah or by seven swift mares. It is interesting to note that the definite number of seven horses is given to the Sun (⁵⁵Sūrya) after much preliminary vacillation in Rgveda. About the symbolism of these horses Prof. Macdonell (vide his Vedic Mythology, p.31) says that the horses represent the rays of the Sun which are also seven in number (the reference in this regard is given in the 16th Rik of 61 Sukta of the 8th Mandala of the Rgveda) but 'the reference seems to be wrong as that Rik speaks of Rudra and not of Sūrya or his rays'. In Rgveda (I.50.9) Sūrya's seven mares are called as daughters of his car. The later Purāṇas believe that the seven horses of Sun are the seven Vedic meters. These are Gayatrī, Brihati, Panktu, Ushnik, Jagatī, Anushtup and Trishtup. The Sun has innumerable rays of which seven are predominant. These are Susumnā, Harikesha, Viśvakarmā, Viśvasrava, Sañjādasu, Arbnavasu and Svaraka. These are

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53. Venkatesvara, Prof. S.V., See Vedic Iconography in Rupam No.42,43,44 April, July, October, 1930.
 54. Macdonell, A.A., Op.cit., Section 14, p.30.
 55. Bhattasali, N.K., See Surya, the Sun god, in Rupam No.6, April, 1921, pp.19-20.
 56. See Kurma Purana, Vangavasi Edition, p.186. and Bhattasali, N.K., Op.cit., pp.23-24.

evidently of different colours, and each is said to nourish a different planet and each planet was given a different hue in the Hindu astronomy. Prof. Macdonell tries to co-relate these seven rays with the seven horses of the Sun. In the [^]Adityahridaya, however, one finds mention of the seven names of the horses of Sun god. They are :- 'Jayajayosca Vijayo Jitoprana Jitasramah Manajavo Jitokrodho Vajinah sapta Kirtita'⁵⁷. i.e., Jaya, Ajaya, Vijaya, Jitoprana[^], Jitasrama, Manajava and Jitakrodha.

The Rgveda (VII.56.1) also refers to Rudra's young heroes borne by noble steeds with sword and lances for their weapons. Another verse describe them as so crowded in their onward sweep that those in front feel the quick breath of those behind.⁵⁸ (Rgveda VII.56.3).

Agni, the swift and agile god is often spoken of as a steed. In the Vedic ritual the horse is found as symbolical of Agni. A horse is stationed also so as to look at the place where fire is produced by friction. When the fire is born towards the east, it is deposited in the track of the horse which goes in front. In the ceremony of piling the fire altar the horse is addressed with this verse: 'In heaven is

57. See Adityahridaya, sloka 21, Quoted in Bharatiya Pratik-vidya, by Janardan Misra, Patna, 1959.
58. Griffith, Hymns of the Rgveda (Second Edition), Vol. II, p.54.

thy highest birth, in air thy naval, on earth thy home'.⁵⁹
Such a rite is explained in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa as bringing Agni together with himself. The same Brāhmaṇa speaks of lighting as a horse descended from the waters or the clouds; the primitive idea that the thunder fertilises the earth could be traced in this observation, made by the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (4.3.4.27, 5.4.13., 7.5.2.18). In this connection, reference may also be made to Āsvins - the horse headed gods of agriculture. They are invoked during the marriage ceremony⁶⁰ to give off-spring.

Incidentally a reference may be made here from the Gita. In the first verse of the fifteenth chapter of this sacred book it is stated that the Āsvattha (the tree of the world) root above and branches below, they say is everlasting. The Vedic rhythms are its leaves. He who knows it is a knower of the Vedas. The tree is called everlasting but as Bhagavan Sankarāchārya explains, 'they say, (prāhuh) in Gītā XV.1., points to the fact that the everlastingness is only apparent: it really stands for momentariness. The tree is called Āsvattha, that means 'a - śvasttha' (not remaining to-morrow). Āsvattha, the tree under which Fire Lord of ritual oblation which is the Universe (Agni = Yajña Prajāpati) takes his stand as a horse, is therefore, explained as asva-sthāna, the horse-stall

59. Macdonell, A.A., Vedic Mythology, pp.158-159.
60. Danielou, A., Hindu Polytheism, p.129.

(Mbh.25). According to the exponent of symbolic etymology (Nirukta), it is the horses of the Sun who during the long night of journey upon the way of the ancestors (Pitryasa), rest in the underworld (Yama-loka), beneath a pippala tree, therefore, called the Asvattha.⁶¹ According to another notion the leaves of Asvattha are always looked as alert as ears of asva and hence it received the name.⁶²

The Rgveda refers elaborately to the 'Asvamedha' sacrifice (Rgveda, I.162.1-22). The Rgveda has in detail described the way and the intention of a horse sacrifice. Curiously enough the Rgveda refers to the roasted flesh of horse as extremely palatable for which gods are even eagerly awaiting :- 'Ye vajinam paripasyanti pakkam ya imahuh surabhirnirharati, ye carvato mamsavikshamupasata uto teshambhigurtirna invatuh'. But in reality the horse's meat is not palatable as has been described in the Rgveda. This arises a doubt whether the term 'asva' in Rgveda means horse or it meant animal in general? The 'asva' was a generic name; the term applied not only to horse but to other animals e.g. agasva or goat

61. Saraswati, Swami
Hirananda,

62. Das, Sudhir Ranjan,

The World Tree, vide JISOA,
Vol.XI, 1943, pp.196-197.
Folk Religious Rites. A Study
in Origins, vide Journal of
the Department of Letters
(New Series), Vol.Two,
Part II, p.113.

(Rgveda IV.85.4 and Prsadasa meant a spotted deer in Rgveda I.89.7).⁶³ In the Rgvedic period a goat used to be immolated before the sacrificial horse as the first portion for Pushan but in the Epic period not only a goat but countless animals bulls, buffaloes, steeds, wild beasts even fishes were sacrificed before the selected horse of the rite was offered.⁶⁴ According to the Aiteraya Brāhmaṇa all the kings who were actually consecrated with Indra's great function are represented as going round the earth completely, conquering on every side and offering the horse in sacrifice (samantam sarvataḥ prithivīm jayan pariyāyasvena cha medhyeneje).⁶⁵ To the best of the kings who performed the famous rite the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (XIII.5.41-23) adds the names of the Pārikshitas (or Pārikshitīyas), Bhīmasena, Ugrasena and Srutasena; the Kosalan King (Kausalya rāja) Para Ātara Hairanyanābha; the Aikshvāku king Purukutsa Dourgaha; the Pāṇchāla king Kṛiṣya, the super men of the Krivis (Krivinām atipurusha) and Sona Sātrāsaha, the Matsya king Dhvasan Daitavana and the Śvikna king Rishabha Yajñatura. The Apastambha Śrauta Sutra writes that only a paramount king (Sārvabhauma Rāja) may perform the Asvamedha (XX.1). The

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63. Chakravarti, M., See (The Horse, Asvasa Lakhane). The Animals in the inscription of Piyadasi, MASI, Vol.I, p.374, 1905-1907.
 64. Macdonell, A.A., Op.cit. p.165 and The Mahabharata Translated by P.C.Roy, Vol.XI (New Ed.), Calcutta, p.163 and pp.168-169.
 65. Raychowdhuri, Hemchandra, Political History of Ancient India (Sixth Edition), p.170.

asva or steed of the sacrifice would for a year roam under the guardianship of a hundred princes and a hundred nobles, a hundred sons of heralds (or charioteers) and village headmen, a hundred sons of warriors and treasurers (Chamberlains ?) equipped with various kinds of defensive and offensive weapons (Satapatha Brāhmaṇa XIII.4.2.6). If the year passed off without any hindrance the steed would then be sacrificed. The feature of the rite included panegyrics of the sacrificer with righteous kings of yore but lute players including a Rājanya who sings to the lute three songs made by himself, "such war he waged, such battle he won". There would also be a 'circle of tales', Pāriplava Ākhyāna which would last by series of ten days for the whole year (S.B.E. X/IV.pp.298 ff; Pāriplava Ākhyāna Satapatha Brāhmaṇa XIII.4.3.2). Even as late as the time of Bhavabhūti (Eighth century A.D.) the Asvamedha was looked upon as the super eminent touchstone to the test the might of warriors conquering the world and an indication of the conquest of all the warriors (cf. Uttara - Rāma charitam Act.IV translated by Vinayak Sadasiva Patvardhan). The sacrifice seems also to have been performed in early times to atone sinful work. The head of the sacrificial horse is put on fire altar in this sacrifice in order to work ill to one's foes (Rgveda VII.143.71). There was also a Vishnuite adoption of the famous rite - no animals being killed on the occasion and the oblations preferred in accordance with the

precepts of the Aranyakas.⁶⁶ Asvamedha sacrifice is mentioned in the Rgveda (1.162), Vajasesniya Samhitā (Chs.22-24), Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (13th Kanda), Aiteraya Brāhmaṇa, Asvalāyana Śrauta (10.6) and in Āpastambha Śrauta Sūtra (1.23). In asvamedha the horse was to be white one with black spots. Aditya is asvamedha (S.B.9.4.2.18). Asvamedha is that which gives light (S.B.10.6.5.8) while Teittiriya Brāhmaṇa (II.5.2.1-3) prescribes Rohita horse be employed in asvamedha sacrifice (American Journal of Philology XII p.429). It had been a very popular form of sacrifice and the sacrificer used to attain nirvana and could have gone to heaven for this act. One could even have been freed from the curses of killing Brāhmins, if any. The Atharvaveda (XIX.53.1) refers to time as a horse that drives with seven reins ... him the vibrant poets mount. The same verse further says that 'his wheels are all the worlds'. Coomaraswamy remarks that 'the words mean what they say i.e. the time is a horse and this horse rides on a seven wheeled chariot drawn by seven horses.⁶⁷ Besides this, the Atharvaveda also refers (IV.21.4) about the horseman 'na tā arvā renukakā - to snute' i.e. the dust raising horseman. Another passage in the same text mentions the body of the horse carrying another body; the commentator very plausibly takes 'tanvain'

66. Raychowdhuri,
Hemchandra,

Early History of Vaishnava Sect.
(2nd Ed.), p.132, and see Political
History of Ancient India, pp.170-171.

67. Coomaraswamy, Dr. A.K., Vide JAOS, Vol.62, 1942, pp.139-140.

to refer to the rider (Atharvaveda VI.92.3); tanuste
vajitanvam[~] nayenti[^]; the commentator explains: arudhasya[^]
sadinsh[^] sariram⁶⁸'.

Reference has been made about horse in the Samaveda (I.5.59) in connection with the deeds of Marut. It says: 'avirmarya[^] a[^] vajam[^] vajino[^] agamam[^] devasya savituh savam; svargam[^] arvanto jayata' which means that 'the youths have come forth to show their strength, God Savita's quickening energy; ye warrior horsemen, win the heaven'. The Taittiriya Samhita[^] (V.4.7) mentions the seven troops of Marut which must have been seven bodies of cavalry and chariotry. In another occasion the same Samhita[^] (VII.1.1.4-6) refers that the Sudra[^] and the horse were born from the feet of Prajapati[^]. Normally horse is associated with the Kshatriyas which is not the case in the Taittiriya Samhita[^] and one may suspect that the Sudras[^] who included large parts of the conquered native population, may have been known and ridden horses before the advent of the Aryans. That such, indeed, was the case we have already seen. Indians in pre-Aryan days knew riding but not charioteering which was introduced in India by the invading Aryans. In White Yajurveda, the Sun again has been found to be addressed as a horse in connection with the praising of Savitri[^] in Agnicayana ceremony (XI.12; XXIX. 12-25).

68. Singh, S.D., Ancient Indian Warfare, pp.60-61.

Vaj^aseniya Samhita^ refers to the horse riders (XXX.13.; 'asva^ sadin^'), horse keepers (XXX.2. asvapa^; XVI.24 and XVII.13 refers to 'asvapati^') and stable master (XXX.16. 'Suta^'). The same text also refers to Manu's mare (XXXVII.12. 'Manorasvasi^').

The Satapatha Brahmana^ (XIII.5.4.16) refers to horses of mail club men. The Taittiriya Brahmana^ mentions (III.4.7.1) riding and Pan^chavimsa Brahmana^ refers to the journey on horse back (XXI.1.9) while Chhandogya Upanishad^ alludes to the Kurus being saved by a mare, pointing thus to the power of cavalry (cf. CHL.1.p.120). The Asvalayana^ Grihyasutra^ distinguishes between 'Sadya^' riding horse and 'vaha^ya' - a draught animal (IX.9.14). Horses symbolise the senses (indriya^ni haya^nanahuh) and the chariot the mind, according to the Katha Upanishad^ (3.4). Later Vedantic literature has the mind compared to a bull who would either rest or run astray, but has to be driven along the steep road to human perfection (ramyo balivardah). The sheaths of soul are in exactly the order in philosophy as in sculpture, the material body (elephant), that of vital airs (lion), the senses (horse) the mind (ox) and the spiritual knowledge dove.⁶⁹

Horse in Brahmanical literature:

The Puranas have many stories to connect the horse

69. Venkatesvara, Symbolism in Indian Art
Prof. S.V., vide Rupam, Vol.30, April 1927, pp.40-41.

with religion. The Matsya Purāṇa (Ch.261, p.902 of Vangavasi Edition) says that the Sungod would be placed on a car with one wheel and seven horses. According to a story related in Bhavishya Purāṇa,⁷⁰ the burning heat of the Sun became more and more intolerable to his wife Surenu who fled away to her father's home leaving his two wives Nikshubhā and Chhāyā. The step-motherly behaviour of Chhāyā to the children of Surenu revealed her personality and Sūrya in great anger went in search of Surenu. Her father informed him that she being unable to bear the heat of Sun any longer had come to him for shelter. Being refused shelter she preferred to repair to the cold regions of north (where she was wandering about in the shape of a mare) rather than to go back to her husband whom she could no longer tolerate. Visvakarmā assured Sūrya that in his present shape he was unbearable and if he wanted to recover his wife he must submit his unsightly burning form to ^{the} process of remodelling. Sūrya in his distress consented to the operation and Visvakarmā the divine artificer, placing Sūrya on his lathe produced a beautiful form Sūrya's previously unsightly body. Thus improved in appearance he went to Surenu in the form of a horse and had three sons by her viz., the divine twins Asvins and Revanta, the lord of horses and horsemen. The Vishnudharmottara Purāṇa writes that Sūrya rides

70. Bhattasali, N.K., Surya, the Sungod, See Rupam No.6, April, 1921, p.21.

a chariot drawn by seven horses. The Mahābhārata (V.99.5) writes that the Sun god roams about on a chariot drawn by seven horses. The Rāmāyana (IV.42.41) remarks that 'his steeds carry him ten thousand leagues in half an hour and three hundred and sixty leagues in one wink. The Rāmāyana also writes that Chandra, the Moon god rides a chariot drawn by thousand horses (7.172-3). The Visvakarma Silpa also comments that the Sun god rides on a one wheeled chariot, drawn by seven horses and is having a charioteer.⁷¹ In Assyrian mythology the Sun also rides a chariot drawn by horses and his coachman is Bumene. This seems to be the archetypal concept⁷² that later survived in Greek and Indian mythology. Horse riding was quite popular in both the Epics. The education of Dhṛtarāstra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura included the inevitable course in horse manship (Mbh. 1.102.17). Rāma is also found referred to as an expert rider and tamer of horses (Ayodhya 1.28., arohe vinaye caiva yukto varana vajinam). Drona teaches Arjuna the art of fighting on the horse back (Mbh.1.123.7). The Adiparva describes a tournament organised by Drona to taste the skill of his pupils after the completion of their horse riding course when they could ride the horse with commendable

71. Vasu, N.N.,

72. Bussagli, Mario,

Archaeological Survey Report of
Mayurbhanj. Introduction, pp.XV-XVI.
Similarities between the figurative
arts in the East and West,
East and West, Vol.VI,1, 1955, p.9 ff.

skill and hit the targets while in full career with shafts in incised with their respective names (Mbh.I.124.24). The Bhishma Parva of the Mahābhārata refers to messengers on horseback sent by the Pāṇḍavas to make their troops desist from further fight (Mbh.6.115.26). There is again a reference to horsemen on chargers of speed and mettle rush against one another (Mbh.6.44.20-21).

In this connection, the interesting story of Gālava needs to be mentioned. At the conclusion of his studies Gālava, a pupil of Viśvāmitra importuned his master to say what present he should make him. Viśvāmitra was annoyed and told him to bring for him eight hundred white horses, each having one black ear. In his perplexity Gālava applied to Garuda who took him to Jayāti of Pratisthāna. The king was unable to provide the horses, but he gave to Gālava, his daughter Mādhavi. Gālava gave her in marriage successfully to Haryāsva, king of Ayodhya, Divodāsa, king of Kāśī and Uśinara, king of Bhoja, receiving from each of them two hundred horses he was in quest of, upon the birth of a son to each from Mādhavi. Notwithstanding her triple marriage and maternity Mādhavi by a special boon, remained virgin. Gālava presented her and the horses to Viśvāmitra.⁷³

73. Dowson, John, A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature, pp.103-104. For a parallel story see the episode of Richika and Satyawati's marriage in Vishnu Purana (vide Elements of Hindu Iconography by G.N.Rao, Vol.I, Pt.I, p.182).

The divine horse was born of water. It has been narrated in the Mahābhārata (1.18.48-53), the Rāmāyana (1.45) and in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (8.8). These texts refer that during the churning of the ocean, Uchchaisravas i.e. the divine horse came out along with many other things and it was obtained by Indra, the king of gods. In the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata there are descriptions and even special names for some fantastic animals. A particular example of such names is 'mīna-vajī' ('mīna vajīsarupam', vide Mbh.III. 173.50-51) i.e. the horses with fish tails. Sometimes wings are also known to have been added with horse's figures.⁷⁴

Indra in the Epic has been described as riding in a yellow car with yellow steeds. His golden car is drawn by golden and peacock coloured steed, one thousand or ten thousand in number (Mbh.5.104.3., cf. 3.168.73; 170.9) - Ten thousand peacocks like steed drag Indras Sun god like car is again mentioned elsewhere in Mahābhārata (ibid. 172.23). Of the yellow steeds (3.168.9f; 1b.62), Uchchaisravas is divine and ever youthful horse who was produced during the churning of the ocean; it is also regarded as the king of horses (Mbh.5.102-12; 6.34.27).

The Lesser Epic discloses that god Agni gave his own car to Arjuna and as Hopkins infers that 'perhaps it

74. Sivaramamurti, C., Sanskrit Literature and Art
Mirrors of Indian Culture, p.2.

was the horse yoked car (the horses are red)'. It further says that the head of a horse is put on fire altar in the horse sacrifice to work ill to one's foes (7.143.71). A goat, a ram and a horse represent respectively Agni, Varuṇa and Sūrya (13.75.37; 84.47 and 56; 85.147f). Horse plays a very important role in early Vaisṇavism. In the Gīta, Viṣṇu says, 'among the horses, know Me to be Uchchahsraḥ begotten of the ocean alongwith nectar' (X.26). In a much later period the horse occupies the 18th place in a longer series of incarnations. In the belief of the masses, it is considered as one of the minor avatāras and as such looked upon as a god of learning with functions similar to those which are usually attributed to Sarasvatī.⁷⁵ In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (5.17.11) it is included in^{the} list of incarnations, 'matsya kurma^{va}raha^svasi^mha^ru^padibhiḥ' etc.

Fecundating character of horse has been hinted earlier specially in connection with horse sacrifice. 'Following the sacrifice of horse, the chief queen lay in sacrificial pit holding the horse's member and went through the motions of union with the animal which was now identified with Prajāpati, 'creation king'. It is also evidenced that the chief queen under went the same ritual with the living horse.⁷⁶ Laying down near it, is a means of securing fertility, has also

75. Rao, Gopinath, Elements of Hindu Iconography Part I, p.260.

76. Mukherjee, Ajit, Tantra Asana, Pl.43.

been the notion of Eggling.⁷⁷ In Indian medical science aphrodisiac medicine is termed as 'Vajikaran' (the drug which gives the virility of the horse). The nomenclature was probably derived from the abnormal longing of oversexed women towards the horse as we have already witnessed in the stories of Ishtar and Semiramis and of Demeter and Poseidon.⁷⁸ The identification of Hayagrīva and Vishnu according to Gonda, must be ascribed to the fecundating character of the deified horse,⁷⁹ offering to whose foot prints has thus been mentioned.⁸⁰

There are handful of legends connected with the Brahmanical Hayagrīva. Vishnu assumed the form of Hayagrīva, melodiously sang the Sāma hymns, befooled two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha and took away from their possession the Vedas and handed those over to Brahmā (vide Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, 347.10-63, p.5391-92, Gita Press). On another occasion, it is told that Vishnu's head was cut by chance and goddess Durgā advised Tvashtā to put a horse's head over his shoulder and thus evolved the Hayagrīva⁸¹ who killed a demon whose name was also Hayagrīva. The demon Hayagrīva after his death in the hands of Vishnu Hayagrīva once again assumed the shape of a horse demon Kesi in the forest region of Yamunā to kill

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77. Gonda, A., Aspects of Early Vishnuism, p.149, ff.13.
 78. Larousse, Encyclopaedia of Mythology, London, 1960, p.174.
 79. Gonda, A., Op.cit., pp.147-148.
 80. Gonda, A., Ibid., p.149, ff.13.
 81. See Devi Bhagavata, Skanda I, Ch.5 (Moor Edition).

Vāsudeva Krishna another vibhava of Vishnu. In the Drona Parva (5.3) and in the Udyoga Parva (30.147) of the Mahābhārata this event has been narrated and Keshin was killed in a fierce battle with Krishna. Dr. J.N.Banerjee thinks that 'these multifarious myths were derived from earlier stories; the reference in the Udyoga Parvan (99) to the Hayasirsa Aditya who on every auspicious occasion rises from the nether region and fills the world called 'Suvarna' with Vedic hymns, proves this passage to have marked an early stage in the possible development of the idea of Hayagrīva Vishnu who was an Aditya from the Sun horse conception of the Vedic period ('Adityānam aham Vishnu').⁸² The Purāṇic references to Hayagrīva, the restorer and the reciter of the Vedas, fully prove that he was primarily a deity presiding over knowledge and wisdom. Hayagrīva was the master of 'Krama' and 'akshara vibhaga' of the Vedas. As a matter of fact the discovery of 'Krama' system of receiving the sacred hymns goes to his credit. In one course, the style was taught by him to one Galava of Babhravya gotra, an inhabitant of Pāñchāla country. Consequently, Galava became the first master of Krama (vide Mahābhārata Sānti Parva 342.102-3, p.3575; 347-77, p.5373 of Gita Press). In another occasion it is told that Brahmā is born from the lotus issuing forth

82. Banerjee, J.N., Hindu Iconography: Vyuhas and Vibhavas of Vishnu. JISOA, Vol.XI, 1946, p.56.

from Vishnu's navel; he worships the horse headed form of Vishnu and receives law from him and thus becomes the demi-urge of the great cult god.⁸³ According to one tradition now recorded in the Oriental Calender, Vishnu claimed to have incarnated himself as Hayagrîva on the fifteenth day of the bright fortnight of Srevana.⁸⁴

In the Satvata list of incarnations, Vâdava-vaktra or Hayagrîva, is one of the most important among the sundry other avatâras of Vishnu, not only from the mythological or iconographic point of view, but for his widespread popularity and acceptance in other cults of India. The concept of Hayagrîva was not only confined within the span of Indian boundary but it migrated to such distant lands as China and Japan.

That the Hayagrîva aspect of Vishnu primarily symbolising wisdom, learning and knowledge, was all through maintained in the Brahmanical conception. Many of the iconographic descriptions of this incarnation substantiate this view. The Vishnudharmottara Purâna describes him as eight handed as a part Samkarsana (Samkarsanânga) in whom two of his six ideal gunas namely jñâna and bala are predominant. The above Purâna refers that of the eight hands, four will

83. Banerjee, J.N., Development of Hindu Iconography, p.512.

84. Joshi, Dr. N.P., Early Brahmonical Sculptures at Bharat Kala Bhavan, Chhavi, the Golden Jubilee Volume, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, pp.179-180.

be engaged in holding sankha, chakra, gadā and padma while the other four hands should be placed on the four personified Vedas which were rescued from the nether regions by Hayagrīva.⁸⁵ The Agni Purāṇa mentions Hayagrīva as four handed in which he should hold sankha, chakra, gadā and Veda. His left leg should be placed on Sesha nāga (snake) and the right leg should be shown on the back of a kūrma (tortoise).⁸⁶

Dr. Banerjee very correctly observes that 'the figures of Hayagrīva are not very common'⁸⁷ although his figure is not altogether unknown. A four handed benign figure of ^{Hayagrīva} Vishnu of Kushāna Mathurā is there in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan. The deity carries gada and chakra in upper right and left hand respectively. The normal right hand is placed on his belly and carries nothing while the proper left, folded inwards has an elongated object, the nature of which is not easy to ascertain. It may be so called water vessel, which has been similarly held by some contemporary Vishnu figures or it may be the manuscript symbolising the Vedas. The latter view fits in with the subsequent iconographic canons.⁸⁸

Another figure of Hayagrīva may also be referred to here

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85. Catvārasca kareḥ kārya vedānāṃ dehādharināṃ/Devena mūrḍhnivīyastā śarvābharanādhārīna/Asvagrīvena devena pura Vedāḥ samuddhritā/Vedāhṛtā dānava pūṅgavabhyam rasātāladdeva vareṇa tēna/Samuddrta yadāvam sammukhya turaṅgamūrḍhna purōshattamena. -- Vishnudharmottara, Ch.80 vv.4-6.
86. Sankhacakra gadā vedāpānīścaśvasīra Hariḥ/Vāmapādo dhṛitah (should be stīthah) Sesha dakṣiṇah Kūrmaprsthagah. -- Agni Purāṇa, Ch.49, v.26.
87. Banerjee, J.N., Op.cit., JISOA, Vol.XI, 1946, p.58.
88. Joshi, Dr. N.P., Op.cit., p.178.

which hails from the site of Nachnā Kutharā near Panna which is dated in the fifth century of the Christian era. The hands of this horse faced god have however been badly damaged. In the Indian Vajrayāna reliefs depicting some forms of Avalokitesvara, Hayagrīva is one of the invariable attendants of Bodhisattva; but in these figures, he is usually shown not with the head of a horse but as a wide and round eyed, pot bellied fierce looking figure (cf. the various Khasarpaṇa Lokeshvara figures whose usual attendants are Hāyagrīva, Sudhana Kumāra, Tara and Bhrikuti Tara). When Vishnu Hayagrīva was adopted into the cult of Mahāyāna Buddhism as Vajra-raga Hayagrīva, an aspect of Avalokitesvara so early as the beginning of the 6th cent. A.D. the benign character of Brahmanical Hayagrīva was given a new orientation. He assumed there a sort of terrific feature. The terrific aspect of Hayagrīva has also been emphasised in certain later Brahmanical manuscripts namely Hayagrīvastotram and Hayagrīvamālā mantra which appear to have been written under the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁸⁹

The museum of Srinagar possesses a standing three faced Vishnu image of which the central face is human, the face to his left is that of a boar while the face on the right represents a horse (asva), the lion face is absent here. At Khajoraho the fourth face (towards the backside) is that of

89. Banerjee, J.N., JISOA, Vol.XI, 1946, p.58.

a horse whereas some mediaeval sculptures in Rajasthan, the horse face occupies the central place.⁹⁰ Of the multiheads, horse head is said to be related to Vishnu's Vāgīśvara aspect and the Vāgīśvara is none else but Hayagrīva as Dr. Prasad⁹¹ opines, while Shri Adris Banerjee associates this horse head with Aniruddha and not with Hayagrīva. Shri Banerjee in this connection refers to the Nārāyaṇa section of the Mokshadharma in the Śānti Parvan where Aniruddha is stated to have appeared before Brahmā with a horse's head (hayasīroh) bearing the tripple staff (tridanda) and Kamandalu.⁹²

Vishnu's future avatara as Kalkin is for the first time mentioned in the Mahābhārata where he appears as a 'brahman' called 'Kalkin' (3.190.94). Later on the Purāṇas also mentions his legends. The Agni Purāṇa narrates (Ch.16. vv.5-11) that at the end of Kaliyuga all sorts of inequities will spread over the whole of earth when people will be choked by false religions, when mlechchhas as kings will be killing their subjects, then lord Vishnu will appear as Kalkin the son of Vishnuyasaḥ and the great sage Vajṇavalka will be his

90. Agrawala, R.C., Animal Faced Sculptures From Rajasthan vide, Bharatiya Vidya Volumes XX-XXI, 1960-1961, Munshi Indological Volume, 1963, p.304 and also see Lalit Kala, No.13, p.58.
91. Prasad, Dr. Maheswari, See Bharati, Bulletin of the College of Indology, B.H.U., No.4, 1960-61, pp.137-147.
92. Banerjee, Shri Adris, Interesting images from South East Rajasthan, Lalit Kala No.12, p.23.

priest. The same Purāṇa describes two varieties of Kalki images, in one of which he is described as two armed; one is holding a bow and bears on the other a quiver full of arrows. In his four armed variety, Kalki holds a sword, a conch-shell, a wheel and an arrow (Dhanuṣṭunānvitaḥ kalki mlechchosadākaro dvijaḥ/Athavasvavasthitaḥ khadgi saṅkha chakra saraṇvitaḥ, See Agni Purāṇa, Ch.49.9). The Vishnudharmottara Purāṇa, describes Kalki as two armed with a sword on his raised hand and riding on horse back and should be shown in an angry mood (Khadgāyukta karaḥ kruddho hayaṛudho mahāvalaḥ). The Hayasirsha Pañcharatra's description of the iconography of Kalki goes very similar to that of the Agni Purāṇa. But the Vaikhāṇasa-sāgama's description of Kalkin is something interesting. It refers to two varieties of Kalki, one is horse-headed while the second one is human faced and in the four arms he is shown to have held saṅkha, chakra, khadga and khetaka. The horse headed aspect of Kalki is not illustrated in Indian sculpture. A horse-headed Kalki image was possibly carved at Sambour (Kompong Svay) in Cambodia (See Indian Mythology by Veronica Ions, p.25) somewhere in the 9th century A.D. (Fig.62) H.Zimmer identifies it as a horse headed yaksha (vide his Art of Indian Asia, Vol.II, Plate 520) whereas M.M.Deneck calls it as a horse headed god (vide his Indian Sculpture, Master pieces of Indian Khmer and Cham Art, Pls.151 and 153).

The concept of Kalki and its iconography have been seriously considered by many scholars. Vishnu is known to have identified himself as 'Uchchaisrava' - a white horse. The question arises whether Kalki was originally a theriomorphic god or he can be taken as a hero of great manly power on horse back ? To this, Gonda suggests that 'it would be too bold a supposition to conclude from this case an originally theriomorphous divinity was split into an anthropomorphous figure and an animal accompanying him.⁹³ It has been further commented that 'there are, first, no ancient tradition of a god Vishnu. And if, in the second place the Supreme Being of Hinduism were to be regarded as having originated in a horse (and in nothing but a horse shaped divinity) why should not have a bear, a tortoise, a dwarf, or a warrior also arisen in a similar way ?⁹⁴ Some reliefs showing a deity on horse back with a drinking cup in his hand and accompanied by many attendants were identified sometimes as Kalkin. B.B.Bidyabinod,⁹⁵ however, correctly explained those as standing for Revanta, son of Sun god. According to Dr. R.D.Banerjee, 'in the eastern school a class of images, hitherto identified as Kalkin the tenth incarnation of Vishnu, have been proved in the majority of cases to be images of Revanta'... In the images of Revanta, we find a dog in a hunting scene on the pedestal. There are

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93. Gonda, A., Aspects of Early Vaisnavism, Utrecht, 1954, p.150.
 94. Gonda, A., Ibid., ff.16.
 95. Bidyabinod, B.B., Vide J.A.S.B., 1909, p.391.

four such images in Indian Museum, Calcutta (vide Supplementary Catalogue, p.85, Nos.5621, 3775-77), one in the Rajshahi Museum (vide A Catalogue of Archaeological Relics etc., p.26, No.F(C)1/258), one in the Sarnath Museum and at least one such image has been discovered at Nalanda (Journal and the Proceedings of A.S.B.(N.S.) Vol.V, pp.392-393 and also see Plate LXVe of Dr. R.D.Banerjee's Eastern Indian Mediaeval Sculptures).

Among a few other divinities who have horse as their mount, mention may be made of Rahu, who according to the prescription of the Vishnudharmottara Purāṇa rides a silver chariot drawn by eight horses.⁹⁶ Rao mentions in this connection about one Asvarūḍha devī who should be shown seated upon a horse, carrying a golden cane in one of her hands, while the other holds the reins of the horse. She has three eyes; on her crown is shown the crescent moon.⁹⁷ (Asvarūḍham karāgre navakanakamayim vetrayasthi dadhana' etc. See Pratimalakṣhanāni in Elements of Hindu Iconography by G.N.Rao, Vol.I, part II, p.122). She represents an aspect of goddess Durgā.

Horse in Buddhist, Jaina and other Miscellaneous literature :

The horse is also found intimately related to Buddha and his religion. It is said that Gautama, his faithful

96. Rao, Gopinath, Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol.I, Part II, pp.321-22.
 97. Rao, Gopinath, Ibid., p.371.

charioteer Chhandaka and his beloved horse Kanthaka were born on the same day. At the time of Siddhartha's birth 'five hundred servants were born, Chhandaka was foremost and five hundred horses, Kanthaka foremost'.⁹⁸ Some scholars take this horse as related to the Sun.^{99,100} To Luce, Chhandaka and Kanthaka were born as part of his equipment as 'Chakravartin'.¹⁰¹ The seven treasures of a 'Chakravartin' are listed in the Mahasudassana and Lakkhana Suttantas.¹⁰² These seven treasures are a wheel, an elephant, a horse, a light giving jewel, a woman (ilhiya), a steward (gahapati) and a minister (parinayaka). The concept of Chakravartin is also to be met with in Jainism. A Jain text called the Thangana refers to fourteen treasures of the Chakravartin viz., wheel, Kāginī, commander-in-chief, a treasurer (gahvai), architect (vaddhai), a chief priest (purohita), a woman (Ithi), horse and elephant. Dr. Sivaramamurti who closely studied the winged horse represented in the 'Raja chakravarti' panel of Jaggayyapeta inclined to regard it as a horse of Valaha class. In the Valahassa Jataka a flying horse is mentioned (Jataka 11, No.196, p.90). It soars in

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98. Inghlot, Harold, Gandharan Art in Pakistan, See Pl.19 and its description.
 99. Senart, M., La legende du Buddha, pp.27-31 and 428.
 100. Davids, T.W.Rhys, Buddhism, p.187.
 101. Luce, Gordon H., Old Burma and Early Pagan, Vol.I, Ch.IX, p.163.
 102. Vide Gilgit Text, Vol.II, Part I, p.36 and also see Rupam Nos. 38-39, April-July, 1929 and compare Buddhist Relief From Nagarjunikonda and Amaravati by Ananda Coomaraswamy, p.74, fig.6.

the sky like the horse of the Yaksha Puranaka in the Vidura Pandita Jataka (loc.cit., IV, No.445, p.146). The winged horse which is depicted in the 'Chakravartin' relief, is according to Dr. Sivaramamurti, an adoption from the Hindu concept of the celestial horse Uchchaihsrava.¹⁰³

Siddhartha's 'great departure' (mahabhinishkramana) took place on the very day his son Rahula was born. Putting his hand upon the back of the steed, as it stood proudly before him, he said, 'well Kankhaka, you must assist me to-night, that by your aid, I may be enable to release all sentient beings from the perils of existence' and then mounted upon his back. From his neck to his tail Kankhaka was 18 cubits in length, of proportionate height as white as the purest conch.¹⁰⁴ Bodhisattva's departure was essential and even gods needed it for he would show the untold millions the path of final salvation. Thus to make Bodhisattva's final escape smooth and undisturbed by his awakened relatives, or city guards, divine beings came down and made arrangements so that the horse with Bodhisattva could move out noiselessly. And we are told that 'Vaisravaṇa tells his yaksha followers: ahaṃ cha purato yāsyē, yujāṃ cha vāhatha hayaṃ'. In the Mahāvastu, it is mentioned that four 'maharajas', in-charge

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103. Sivaramamurti, Dr. C., Amaravati Sculptures in Madras Museum, Bulletin of the Madras Govt. Museum, New Series, General Section, Vol.IV, Madras, 1942, p.94.
104. Hardy, R.Spence, A Manual of Buddhism, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Vol.LVI, pp.158-159.

of four cardinal directions held up the legs of Kanthaka:
 "Chaturi mahāraj[^]etu kanthakasya pāda grahitā[^]h".¹⁰⁵ With such
 divine aids, the escape of Gautama had been a success. But
 afterwards, Bodhisattva wanted to get rid of his last worldly
 attractions. They were his groom Chhandaka and his mount
 Kanthaka. Bodhisattva told them to go back to Kapilavastu
 and inform his parents about his whereabouts and intentions
 and also that he had become a recluse. Chhandaka intended to
 become a 'vikshu' and wanted to serve Bodhisattva but on the
 request of his master he reluctantly agreed to go back but
 his mount Kanthaka declined the idea of going back altogether.
 It became unbearable for the horse Kanthaka to be parted from
 Bodhisattva and the noblest of steeds virtually licked in its
 emotion and dropped hot tears on Bodhisattva's feet. At this
 the Bodhisattva was moved and consoled him in the following
 words: 'Shed not tears, Kanthaka. This thy perfect equine
 nature has been proved, bear with it; this thy labour will
 soon have its fruits'.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly Chhandaka and Kanthaka
 went back with Gautama's princely dresses and ornaments and
 conveyed to king Suddhadhana Gautama's last message. But the
 Pali version of this episode informs us that the horse goes
 out of sight and dies of broken heart¹⁰⁷ and yet in another

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105. Majumdar, N.G., Guide to the Sculptures in the Indian Museum, Part II, p.161.
 106. Cowell, E.B., The Buddha-Karita of Asvaghosha Book VI, 58, p.111, Quoted in Ideals of Indian Art E.B.Havell, London, 1911.
 107. Luce, Gordon H., Op.cit., Ch.IX, p.163, and also see Jataka I, 65 (Translated by Henry Clarke Warren in his book Buddhism in Translation, Mass., 1922, p.67.

version Kanthaka is known to have committed suicide by drowning itself in a nearby river and after death was born¹⁰⁸ in the 'Trayastimsa Heaven' as deva Kanthaka.

The horse also plays a very significant role in some of the Buddhist Jataka stories. In the Pali version of Valahassa Jataka we find the reference of a horse, white all over, beaked like a crow, with hair like munja grass, possessed of supernatural power of human speech, who flew through the air from Himalaya to the island in or to the south of India, safely conveying, as an act of mercy, distressed persons wanting to go home. The Supriya story in the Divyavadana (pp.120-121) describes the horse as the very king of its kind, happy, healthy, strong with the senses, fully developed and capable of uttering human speech to the top of his voice, raising the fore parts of the body, who volunteered to do service to the mankind on the Sabbath. In the Pali version the horse himself is the Bodhisatta, the merciful hero; in the Avadana version the hero is Supriya, the head of the merchants; in the former the horse safely conveys home two hundred and fifty ship wrecked merchants including their head Supriya; some of them mount on his back and some hold by his tail; in the latter the merchant is asked to sit on his back, closing¹⁰⁹ his eyes.

108. Hardy, R. Spence, Op.cit., p.161.
 109. Barua, Benimadhab, Barhut, Book II, Jataka Stories, pp.104-105, Calcutta, 1939 and also see The Jataka, Vol.II, No.196, pp.89-91 by E.B.Cowell, Cambridge University Press, 1895.

In the Vidurapandita Jataka, we find Purnaka, fiance of Indrati, daughter of Nāgaking Varuna caught hold of Vidura carried him off by a horse's tail and tried to dash him to death from a mountain precipice so that Vidura's heart could be procured. But in this he failed due to Vidura's merit.¹¹⁰

In the Guna Karanda Vyūha, Sākyamuni tells of a miraculous horse (the horse was white according to Abhinishkramaṇa Sūtra) that saved Simhala (in reality himself) from the wiles of a rakshasi. Simhala had a ship wreck near Tamradvīpa - an island inhabited by beautiful women who were in reality rakshasis. They tempted him but he was saved by a white horse who appeared on the sea-shore and carried him away to a safe place. Simhala identified himself as Buddha and the miraculous horse was Avalokitesvara. In the Far East, Avalokitesvara is often spoken of as a white horse or a horse headed divinity (Bato-kwan-non).¹¹¹ Ba-to, the horse headed Kwan-non takes the form of the Tibetan masculine divinity Hayagrīva who is regarded as the protector of horses and is supposed to frighten away the demons by neighing like a horse. Of the few forms of Hayagrīva in Tibet mention may be made of one form in which he has three heads, each crowned

110. Majumdar, N.G., Guide to the Sculpture Gallery, Part I, Early Indian School, p.37.

111. Getty, Alice, The Gods of Northern Buddhism, p.58 and also see foot note on the same page.

by a horse's head, six arms and eight legs and stands on a bunch of snakes. In another form Hayagriva takes the shape of a 'phur-bu' - a magic dagger.¹¹² Sometimes one also meets with a totally different form viz., Hayagriva as a human being with a horse's head, dressed in a kind of monk's gown and playing the guitar.¹¹³ In Indian Buddhist iconography Hayagriva is regarded as an accessory figure of Khasarpana Lokeshvara but there the face is terrific but not horse like. The Saptasatika Hayagriva, an emanation of Amitabha bears the head of a horse but the three headed Hayagriva who emanates from Akshobhya does not bear horse's head.

The white horse was held in esteem in Chinese Buddhism and we come to know its importance from the story of King Ming-ti. In China the earliest Buddhist sanctuary was known as White Horse Monastery.¹¹⁴ The tradition of white horse also reached Japan, for the horse's head in Bato's hair must be white to be efficacious. Sometimes Ba-to Kwan-non is shown with three heads; the central one being that of a horse. The form closely resembles one of the manifestations of Hayagriva.

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112. Pott, Dr. P.H., Introduction to the Tibetan Collection of the National Museum of Ethnology, Holland, p.100.
 113. Pott, Dr. P.H., Ibid., p.101.
 114. See Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism, Vol.iii, p.212 and Beal, Chinese Buddhism, p.88, n.1, Getty, A. Op.cit., p.94.

That the Sun god i.e. [^]Sūrya rides a chariot drawn by seven horses was referred to in many Buddhist texts. Dharmadhātuvāgisvara Maṇḍala of Nishpannayogavali refers to Surya as 'Sapta turaga rathe [^]Adityo', the Durgatiparisodhana Maṇḍala refers to Surya as riding on 'Saptasva rathe' and the same is to be found in Kriyāsamgraha Pāñjika¹¹⁵ of Kulladatta. In the image of Marīchi developed in the Mahāyāna Buddhism one comes across some attributes which were similar to that of the Sun god of the Brāhmanical tradition. Like [^]Sūrya she rides a chariot, but this chariot is drawn not by seven horses but by seven pigs.

Apart from these religious references some Buddhist texts are known to have made some casual and general observations on horses. According to the [^]Dīghanikāya (1.103-104) kings ride on horses, so also the commoner. The Majjhima Nikāya (II.129) discussed the technique of taming and training of horses. In the Ratthupala Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (II.69), the kuru king is asked whether he was at the age of 20 or 25 expert in handling a horse and in war. The king said, 'He assuredly was'. The horses of north are mentioned in the Vinaya text. Horse dealers of Uttarakuru are mentioned as arriving with five hundred horses (Vinaya III.5). The

115. Pal, Dr. Pratapaditya and
Bhattacharyya, Dipak
Chandra,

The Astral Divinities
of Nepal, p.60.

Bhaddasali Sutta of Majjhima Nikaya (1.446) vividly describes the training of the horse, in the matter of wearing the bit and harness, going straight along, running in circle, as an art of special trait (Khurakaya, the horse is trained to go along the tips of its hoofs so that no sound is heard).

Incidentally, mention may be made of Fa-hsien's (See Beal's Buddhist Records, Vol.I, pp.68-69) description of a peculiar rock cut monastery in Deccan which had five stages - 'the lowest is made with elephant figures and has 500 cells in it. The second is made with lion shapes and has 400 chambers in it. The third is made with horse shapes and has 300 chambers and the fourth is made with ox shapes and 200 chambers. The fifth dome shapes and has 100 chambers in it'..... Smith conjectures that these animals symbolised the four quarters.

The horse has also found very popular in Jaina pantheon and it is related to some of its male and female divinities in the form of a mount. (Vrso gajāsṡvakapayah Lanchchhanani etc., see Aparājitaprichchhā 8-9). Sambhavanātha, the third Tirthankara has a horse as his mount. Gomukha yaksha with a bovine or horse's head is the attendant of the first Tirthankara Adinātha. Manovega, the yakshini attendant of Tirthankara Padmaprabha has a horse as her vehicle

116. Bhattecharyya, B., Jain Iconography, p.127.

117. Panchamukhi, R.S., Gandharves and Kinnaras in Indian Iconography, Dharwar, 1951, p.48.

('asvavahanasamstha cha Manovega tu kamada' - Aparajita prichchha 20; on another occasion she is told as 'turangavahanadevi Manovega chaturbhuja'). Similarly in the Svetambara tradition the horse is the vehicle of Chanda or Prachanda or Gandhari and she is the yakshini attendant of Tirthankara Neminatha and according another Svetambara text (Nirvana Tilaka, Agra mss.), Kandarpa yakshini attendant of Tirthankara Dharmenatha has a horse as her mount. And lastly in both Svetambara and Digambara tradition Achyuta, one of the sixteen Vidyadevis, rides a horse (compare Acharadinakara's description).

Kautilya in his Arthashastra revealed his deep-rooted understanding about horses. To him the breed of Kamboja, Sindhu, Aratta and Vanayu countries are best. Those of Bahlika, Papeya, Sauvira and Taitala are of middle quality and the rest ordinary (avarah). He further recommends that three sorts may be trained for war or for riding considering their varied natures such as furious (tikshana), mild (bhadra) or stupid or slow (manda).¹¹⁸ Kautilya again informs us that the face (mukha) of the best horse measures 32 angulas and the circumference of the best (parinaha) horse measures 100 angulas. Our learned author has further referred to the different kinds of movements of the horse. Some of these

118. Shamasastri, Dr. R., Kautilya's Arthashastra 5th Edition, 1956, Mysore, p.148.

movements have been recognised by Dr. Sivaramamurti in the battle scenes depicted in the reliefs of Amaravati.¹¹⁹ The movements of horses as was observed by Kautilya may be enumerated as leaping like a cuckoo (kokila - samchari), dashing with its breasts almost touching the ground (urasya), leaping like a crane (baka-samchari), jumping like a monkey (kopi-pluta), like a frog (bheka-pluta), with sudden jump (eka-pluta) and jumping with one leg (eka pada pluta) etc.¹²⁰ The regular training of a horse in its preparation for war (sannahyam karma) has also been pointed out by Kautilya. Kautilya noticed horse's circular movement (vaigana), slow movement (niehairgata), jumping movement (langhana), gallop (dhorana) and their response to signals (narahstra). In this connection, reference may be made to the Dighanikaya which gives a list of twenty five major silpas of which one is 'assatharana' (horse-trapping).¹²¹

In this connection mention may also be made of Samarangana Sutradhara which has also discussed types of horses and their varied nature (S.S.33). It informs us about seven types of horses alongwith their dimensions (asva pramana). According to this text the 'sundara' horse measures sixty angulas, 'vijaya' sixty eight, 'srivatsa' of seventy two,

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119. Sivaramamurti, Dr. C., Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum Bulletin of the Madras Govt. Museum, 1942, pp.162-163.
120. Shamasastri, Dr. R., Op.cit., p.149.
121. Agrawala, V.S., Indian Art, p.58.

vibhava of eighty and the 'santa' variety of horse should measure eighty four angulas. The same text further refers to four varnas of the horse; they are Brāhmaṇa varṇa (one walking steadily and reliable to others), Kshatriya varṇa (loyal to the master and unreliable to others), Vaiśya varṇa (one drinking water entering into the water) and Sūdra varṇa (one drinking water outside the water). The above text has also discussed about the different asva-jatis such as paravara samudbhava (born of the oceans), Turkodbhava (born of Turkistan), Dakṣarāṣṭrodbhava (born in Dakṣa-rāṣṭra), Mahāvanantobhava (born in Mahavanantas), Dāhalodbhava (born in Dāhaladesa) Venuvatītatobhava (born in the banks of Venuvatī) and Gandadesodbhava (born in Gandadesa).¹²²

The Sūkranītisāra has very significantly made a statement regarding the making of figures of horses. In its section 7, the Sūkranīti prescribes that 'when a figure (rūpa) of a horse is to be made, the model (bimba) should always be in view (vikṣya), and if it cannot be looked at (adristva) the figure should not be made. The artist (silpi) having first (agre) made his visual contemplation (dhyātva) on the horse and attentive to his forms (avayava natah) should do his work, embodying all the proportions (mana) of horses meet for splendour and divorced from ill omen. 73.74(145-147).

122. Shukla, Dr. Lalit Kumar, A Study of Hindu Art and Architecture, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Vol. LXXXII, 1972, p.126.

It will be seen here, that in spite of the apparent demand for likeness to the horse in view, there is insistence on visualisation and no adherence to ideal proportions.¹²³

Incidentally the Sūkranīti is also found to have elaborately discussed the essential qualifications for 'asvapati' 'asva-sikshaka' and 'vāji sevaka' (Sūkranīti, slokas 129-136).¹²⁴ According to the slokas 129-130 of the Sūkranīti, 'asvadhīpati' should have the following qualifications: he must understand the mental state of a horse; he should know its breed, he must understand its movement, he must have fairly good idea of horse and its rules, he should have knowledge about horse diseases and their treatment, he must know what is right and what is wrong for a horse and from the teeth he must realise the motivation of a horse etc. The Sūkranīti further says that only such a one who can control

123. Coomaraswamy, Dr. A.K., Transformation of Nature in Art, Ch.IV, p.116, Dover Publication, New York, 1931.

124. Asvanām hrdayam vetti jativarna bhramairgunān
Gatim siksham chikitsasva sattvam saram rujantatha
Hitahitam poshanancha manam yanam dato vayam
Surascha vyuhavittaprajna karyosvadhīpatishcha
(Sloka 129-130)

Sakitam vechitam valgitakam dhauratamaplutam
Tuyam mandascha kutilam sarpanam parivartanam
Ekadesaskanditancha getirasvasya vetti yah
yuthavalam yatharthascha sikshayet sacha sikshaka
(Sloka 134-135)

Vajisevasu kusalah palyadinīyogavitta
Drdhangascha tatha surah sa karyo vajisevakah
(Sloka 136)
vide Sūkranīti, Part I, pp.98-99 by Babu Padma Deva
Pandeya, Varanasi - 1889.

eleven types of horses' movements, should be made a asva-sikshaka (Slokas 134-135). Regarding the asva-sevaka, it is said that one who serves a horse fairly well, who can adjust saddle properly, who is solidly built and who is a Sûra,¹²⁵ should be chosen as a servant for the horses.

These textual references are sufficient to prove that the ancient Indians estimated highly the usefulness of a horse and as it is evident from the above information that the ancient Indians used to pay highest of attentions to maintain this animal. They studied their nature, their psychology, their physiology, their movement, tension, their diseases and the treatment there of. In the case of a deified horse iconographic prescriptions were laid down including their proportions, lengths, dimensions colours and forms. The ancient Indian texts in this way inform us that the horse was used for riding, for hunting and in war. It was also used for drawing the plough share and for driving chariot. It was sacrificed, was identified with gods like Sûrya, Prajâpati, Vishnu, Vâc etc. and was raised to a Zoomorphic deity not only in Hinduism but also in Buddhism and Jainism.

In the light of the above discussion it may be concluded that the Vedic tradition primarily emphasised the

125. Sukranîti, by Sukrâchârya, Edited with the Vidyotini Hindi Commentary by Sri Brahma Sankar Misra - The Kasi Sanskrit Series, 185, Chowkhamba Publication, Varanasi, 1968.

character of speed noticed in the horse. This element of speed in horse came handy in its being equated with the Sun in the Vedic cosmology (Rgveda III.77.3., Atharvaveda XIX.53.1 and Sukla Yajurveda XI.12., XXIX.12.25). The flying aspect of the Sun, the solar ball circumventing the vault of the sky led to the imagining of horse as a winged creature, thus giving rise to the concept of the winged horse (Dadhikrâ in Rgveda IV.38-40, is conceived as winged and was compared as swan). Deification of these animals appears to have been a gradual process and by and large, as it appeared from the different texts, the horse came to be related to many gods and goddesses. Prajâpati appeared as a white horse (Rgveda VII.3.2.14) and it became the mount of Rudra (Rgveda VII.56.1). Yet in a different way it had symbolised Agni. Initially the horse was used as a ridden animal and was yoked to different divine chariots. Surya rides a chariot drawn by either one or more than one horses (Rgveda I.50., V.62., VI.64., Matsya Purâna Ch.261, Vishnudharmottara Purâna, Mahâbhârata V.99.6., Râmâyana IV.42.41). Similarly Indra is also known to have ridden chariot or moved on horse's back (Rgveda VIII.6.36., Mahâbhârata 5.104.3., 3.168.73). In this way many of the deities such as Maruts, Chandra, Râhu, Kalki, Revanta are conceived either as riding on the back of a horse or driving a chariot drawn by horses. Besides, serving as a divine mount, in certain cases the form of the horse came to be incorporated

in the figure of certain main and intermediary gods and goddesses. Horse headed Dadhyañca has been referred to in the R̥gveda (I.116.12, I.117.22, I.119.9, X.48.10). The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa related (VI.4.2.3) horse headed Dadhyañca to Vāc, goddess of speech and wisdom. Dadhyañca on another occasion in the same text was identified as Prajāpati (S.Brāh. VII.3. 2.14) as the embodiment of supreme Brāhmanical knowledge. The divine twins Asvins are also attributed with horse's head and are regarded as gods of agriculture. The concept of fecundity was attached to the twin deities, the Asvins. Vishnu assumed the form of Hayagrīva and he symbolised in this aspect wisdom, learning and knowledge (Mbh. Śānti Parva 347.10-63; Drona Parva 5.3; Udyoga Parva 30.147; Agni Purāṇa Ch.49.V.26; Vishnudharmottara Purāṇa Ch.80.vv.4-6). Although rarely, even Kalki, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, sometimes appeared as horse headed. In the Buddhist conception, Avalokiteśvara, is conceived sometimes as having a horse's head. References to horse headed yaksha, yakshī, kinnara, kinnarī are also frequently witnessed in our ancient texts. Sometimes the horse was used as a symbol. A saddled horse without rider and a parasol at its top represented in early Buddhist narrative art the presence of Bodhisattva on its back and referred to the event of the Great Departure of Siddhartha while in the Rajachakravartī panels its presence denoted that it was regarded as symbolical jewel (Asa-ratna) of an unvanquished ruler.

Chapter - III

Horse in early Indian art

Horse in early terracottas:

As has been pointed out in the previous chapter the figures of horse discovered so far from the type sites of Harappan culture and its extended areas are very few in number. A few bones and teeth of horses have however been unearthed from different places and these led Wheeler to conclude that horse was a familiar feature of Indus carvan. But then, it becomes a real mystry why the artists in pre-Aryan days were not inspired to give shape to this fascinating animal ? These artists carved and moulded quite a good number of other beasts including bull, tiger, rhyno, elephant etc. If the horse was known to them, why then they had singularly disfavoured the idea of shaping a horse, is yet a riddle to be solved. It is very difficult to conclude at the present state of our knowledge that there might have been a taboo in shaping a horse ! What appears to be a plausible hypothesis is that the horse might have been a rare species in those days and artists could not study freely its behavioral patterns as they could in the case of many other animals. Pre-Aryan settlers might have seen some nomadic horses ridden by herdsmen who by chance would enter India and make some of

the Indus valley sites as their camping grounds. A few artists among the fortunate group of pre-Aryan settlers in India viewed this rare animal and as a memento of their chance discovery moulded this animal in terracotta while a few painters painted it on potteries. Mackey tentatively identified a model animal without tail and ears as that of a horse and for identifying the same he gave much importance to the modelling of neck whose sweeping curve atonce reminded him of the neck formation of a horse.¹²⁶ The painted horse on a pottery fragment found by Stein¹²⁷ from Gushanak hill and another pointed out by Sankalia¹²⁸ painted on a pottery at Rangpur are both delineated in highly stylised manner. A few terracotta horses which have so far been discovered, do not reveal any artistic merit. Aurel Stein identified one such figure from Periano-ghundai¹²⁹ as to be definitely that of a horse but about the head from Zeyak,¹³⁰ he was not sure whether it represents truly a horse or not ! The horse discovered by Rowland at Sari-Dheri and the three horses at Lothal¹³¹ discovered by Rao disclose the executions as of cruder workmanship. The small terracotta horse that has been discovered at

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126. Mackey, E.J.H., Further Excavations at Mahenjodaro, pp.289-290, Pl.LXXVII, 11.
 127. Aurel, Stein, MASI, p.118, Pl.XXII.
 128. Sankalia, H.D., Pre-history and Proto-history of India and Pakistan, p.169, f.n.51.
 129. Stein, Sir Aurel, An Archaeological Tour in Waziristan and Northern Baluchistan, MASI, No.37, 1929, p.38, Pl.VII (P.W.6).
 130. Stein, Sir Aurel, An Archaeological Tour in Gedrosia, MASI, No.43, 1931, p.34, Pl.I (Z.W.5).
 131. Vide Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1959-60, p.18, p.XV.E.

Kayatha does reflect not only abstraction in its form but also abstraction is noticed in the treatment of its mane which continues all through on its back and is connected ultimately with its tail (Fig.1). The unknown pre-Aryan artists made abstraction of the forms and paid less attention towards their naturalistic renderings. The skill and understanding of the artists excelled in the cases of bull, elephant etc., but they failed to bring in the naturalistic movement in the terracotta horses.

After the fall of the Indus Valley civilization and before the rise of the Mauryas in the 4th cent. B.C. there had been a big hiatus specially in the field of architectures and sculptures. Besides some painted potteries and coins, this period is conspicuously silent about other archaeological expressions. The history of this period mostly is reconstructed through literary evidences in which we find abundant references to horse but we sadly miss any figure of this animal either in stone, metal, and terracotta or in painting.

Horse in Mauryan monuments and in contemporary terracottas:

The first deliberate and conscious attempt of shaping of a horse in durable material like stone was witnessed in the art of the Mauryas in India. The well known circular

abacus of a detached pillar capital made in Chunar sand stone now in the collection of the Archaeological Museum at Sarnath in Varanasi has the representation of a horse in a galloping pose. The unknown carvers at Sarnath had made an attempt to break the severe plainness of the abacus (anda or dikmandala or chakra¹³²vala) by carving four quadrapeds (maha¹³³ ajanya¹³⁴ pasu) alternating with four wheels (chakras). The animals noted here are a striding elephant, a galloping horse (Fig.2), a walking bull and a prancing lion. Vogel took these as merely ornamental addition¹³⁴ while Smith took those as symbolising four cardinal points.¹³⁵ Almost a similar view was held by Mr. Ganguli who stated that the animals below were very probably meant to indicate the guardians of four directions.¹³⁶ Traditionally Indra is considered as the guardian of eastern region, Yama of south, Varuna of west, and Kuvera of the north.¹³⁷ These gods have respectively the elephant, the bull,

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132. Agrawala, Dr. V.S., Indian Art, p.98. Dr. Agrawala has also referred to another damaged lion capital which hails from Udaigiri which is dated in the Gupta period. The abacus of this capital shows a winged lion, an elephant, a horse and double-humped Bactrian camel; See Op.cit., p.342, fig. 46.m.
133. Saraswati, S.K., A Survey of Indian Art, p.32.
134. Sahní, Daya Ram, Guide to Buddhist Ruins at Sarnath, p.41.
135. Smith, Vincent, History of Fine Art in India and Ceylone (1911), 59f.
136. Ganguli, Kalyan Kumar, Art of Asoka - A Study in Style and Symbolism. J.D.L.(New Series), Vol.II, Part II, p.297.
137. Hopkins, E.W., Epic Mythology, p.149.

the horse and the lion as their symbols.¹³⁸ The concept of different deities guarding the four quarters as four kings finds corroboration in the Buddhist concept of the chattaro-¹³⁹ maharajas whose heaven is halfway on the mount Sineru (Sumeru). The four maharajas of Buddhist conception are Dhatarattha of the east, Virudhaka of the South, Virupaksha of the west and Vessavana on the north. Mr. Ganguli further informs that the four wheels represent the sun god, the moon god, the wind god and the fire god as protecting the other four subsidiary directions. Bloch took these animals as representing gods Surya, Indra, Siva and the goddess Durga and indicate the subordination of these Brahmanical deities to the Buddha and his dharma.¹⁴⁰ Mr. Daya Ram Sahni opined that the drum with four animals was meant to represent the Anotatta Lake, one of the sacred lakes of the Buddhists in which Buddha took his bath. He drew our attention in this connection to a Buddhist text in Burmese character which describes and illustrates a lake as having four mouths guarded by a horse¹⁴¹ a dragon, a bull and an elephant. Those who want to connect these animals with Buddha and his religion have further referred to Yuan Chwang who expressly mentioned that the

138. Ganguli, Kalyan Kumar, Op.cit., p.297.

139. Vide Divyavadana, II, p.207.

140. Sahni, Daya Ram, Op.cit., p.41 and also see V.S. Agravala's Indian Art, p.102.

141. Raychowdhuri, H.C., Studies in Indian Antiquities, Ch.XX, p.218.

Sarnath pillar was erected by Asoka at the spot which the Buddha, having attained enlightenment, first preached his religion.¹⁴² This led many scholars to interpret the capital in the light of the famous Buddhist treatise called Dhammachakka-ppavattana Sutta which is concerned with the First Sermon of Buddha at Isipatana-Migadaya. Foucher on this basis connected the four great events of Buddha's life, the bull standing for his Birth (Zodiac constellation, the date of the birth in Vrsa-rasi), the elephant representing the Conception (Mayadevi's dream), the horse representing the Great Departure (mahabhinishkramana) and the lion standing to represent Buddha as Sakyasimha, the lion of the Sakya race. The only missing link is the Bodhidruma representing the Enlightenment. The above interpretation, according to Raychowdhuri has much force and reason to support of it. To Raychowdhuri the inclusion of a deer would have been more appropriate in the Sarnath capital to represent the incident of Dharmachakrapravartana. Another significant point in this that the term Sakyasimha with which the lion is told to be associated, is not met with in Asokan epigraphy. Buddha was called by Asoka himself as Sakyamuni. Raychowdhuri prefers the idea that the Sarnath pillar capital symbolising atonce the concept of Dharmachakrapravartana as well as the idea of a Chakravarti.¹⁴³ He further pointed towards the

142.

See Watters on Yuan Chwang, II, 50.

143. Raychowdhuri, H.C., Op.cit., p.219.

Chakravarti Sihanada Sutta which affords a clue to the proper appreciation of the capital, its chakra and its crowning lions (Chakravarti, as possessor of Chakkaratana, Hatthiratana, Assaratana etc.).¹⁴⁴

While Raychowdhuri finds in Sarnath capital a blending or compromising attitude between the concept of the Chakravarti ruler (Dhamma-vijaya) and the birth of new religion (Dharmachakrapravartana), John Irwin¹⁴⁵ emphatically concluded that the tradition of pillars and its capitals which were made by Asoka was religious not imperial (Rajachakravarti ?) or secular and in commenting that he holds the same view as¹⁴⁶ was suggested earlier by Marshall and Foucher.

In this connection mention may also be made of the cult of Four Great Animals which was found in gushing admittance in the religious concept of Stupa. The Niddesa refers to them as Hastivrata, Asva-vrata, Go-vrata, Suparna-vrata amongst others and the Bharhut Stupa shows these animals sculptured in a religious atmosphere.¹⁴⁷

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144. See Chakravarti panel in Jaggayyapeta, The Art of Indian Asia, H. Zimmer, Pl.37, Amaravati panel in Musee Guimet, Pl.10 of The Oriental World, The Landmarks of World's Art Series and same theme at British Museum, Pl.VI, Sculptures from Amaravati by Douglas Barrett.
145. Irwin, John, Asokan Pillars. A Research of the Evidence - The Burlington Magazine, Vol.CXV., Nov. 1973.
146. Marshall, Sir A.S.R. A.R. 1904-5.
147. Agrawala, Dr. John, V.S., Op.cit., p.141.

Of the four animals on Sarnath abacus, only the horse appears in dynamic movement, the rest are shown striding on in a leisurely fashion. Mr. Achyut Kumar Mitra described this horse as 'spirited in movement and distinct from the background, yet not sharply defined against it, like the reliefs of Bharhut.¹⁴⁸ To Prof. Nihar Ranjan Ray, the movement and modelling of this particular beast recalls the two horses in relief on the sarcophagus of the Amazons¹⁴⁹ (see Ancient Art, Carotti, p.218, fig.298) and Prof. Saraswati has very aptly brought in a comparison between the animals on the top and those on the abacus. While the former present a 'conventional and stylised' look the latter betray an obvious 'freshness and naturalness' in their composition and modelling.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, the animals at the top are shown in a static state while the animals on the abacus are depicted in action. This evident contrast has made this sculpture interesting and appealing.

It is commonly supposed that the pillar at Rumendel¹⁵¹ which was made by Asoka had a horse as its capital. This is based on a controversial reading of the inscription and

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| 148. Mitra, Achyut Kumar, | See his article 'Mauryan Art in Indian Historical Quarterly Vol.III, No.3, p.547. |
| 149. Ray, Nihar Ranjan, | Maurya and Sunga Art, 1945, p.41. |
| 150. Saraswati, Prof. S.K., | A Survey of Indian Sculpture, 1957, p.32. |
| 151. Beal, S., | Buddhist Records of the Western World, II, p.24 f. |

the balance of opinion among the epigraphists seems to be
opposed to such an interpretation.¹⁵² The Rummendei pillar
inscription states that the body of a young elephant was
carved under the instruction of the emperor who had visited
the place because it was the birth place of Buddha,¹⁵³ while
Hiuen Tsang mentions in his record 'a pillar with a figure
of a horse'.¹⁵⁴ What made Hiuen Tsang to infer such an idea,
it is not known because at the time of Tsang's visit to
Lumbini, the capital had been broken in the middle by lightning.
He does not mention the inscription but it was Fang-Chih who
connected the same with Buddha's birth. This was the pillar
to which Asoka is known to have paid highest honour and marked
it as the spot of the birth place of the Buddha (hida[^] Buddhē
jate Sakyamuni ti). So the emperor came to this spot, paid
homage to it and raised a pillar (silathabe usapapite) and
built a railing carved in stone. It is therefore presumed that
the Rumendei pillar was erected by Asoka in his pilgrimage to
this holy site sometime in 257 B.C. In the absence of the
figure of a horse, it is difficult to say whether it was at
all topped by a horse. But if we accept Hiuen Tsang or one
version of the reading of the inscription as suggesting the

152. Irwin, John, Op.cit., f.n. 28.

153. Ganguli, Kalyan Kumar, Op.cit., p.285.

154. Dube, C.B., A visit to the Lumbini Garden, the birth place of Buddha, The Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society, Vol.XXI, Parts 1-2, p.104.

existence of the figure of a horse, then it may be assumed that the said animal was selected to top the capital so as to indicate the event of Great Departure (Mahabhinishkramana) from the city of Kapilavastu.

The representation of a spirited galloping horse and some other animals have led many scholars including Dr. Kramrisch to believe that the artists who were employed by the Asokan court had long experience in stone carving behind them. It has, moreover, been observed, ¹⁵⁵ 'that upto the time of Mauryan dynasty, India achieved nothing better than a kind of folk art and the sudden appearance of the pillars was inconceivable without the intervention of foreign sculptors trained in Perso-Hellenistic tradition'. Marshall and Foucher ¹⁵⁶ wrote long ago that 'the two capitals (Sarnath and Sanchi) are wholly alien to the spirit of Indian art ... Only an Asiatic Greek sculptor with generations of artistic effort and experience behind him could have produced them'. It has been, in the same line conjectured by Irwin that two or three generations after the collapse of the Achaemenid empire, descendants of the Hellenistic craftsmen employed at the Persepolis had been engaged by Asoka in India. ¹⁵⁷

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155. Wheeler, Sir Mortimer, Iran and India in Pre-Islamic Times Ancient India Bulletin, A.S.I., No.4, 1947-48, pp.85-101.
156. Marshall, Sir John and Foucher, Alfred, The Monuments of Sanchi, Vol.I, Calcutta, 1939, pp.89-90.
157. Irwin, John, Op.cit., p.713-714.

According to Mr. Ganguli, 'the lions have been the chief element of controversy; most scholars claiming Perso-¹⁵⁸ Hellenistic influence as responsible for the lions' 'Though much has been said about foreign influence on the art of Asoka, one can not ignore', said Mr. Ganguli, 'or rule out the possibility of existence of a flourishing art tradition in India from long before Asoka's time. The lion lacks the naturalism which pervades the bull, elephant and horse' and the said scholar rightly further remarks that 'this difference is not only to be traced in case of the animals of Asoka¹⁵⁹ but also in the sculpture of subsequent ages'. In fact the lion was ferocious and could not be domesticated while the three other animals were docile and domesticated. This might have been one reason that artist could not study lion comfortably. In Asokan art the lion was not shown as an animal of nature but a symbol and hence lacks naturalism. Elephants and humped bulls are absent in Assyrian art; the horse does occur but there has been striking dissimilarity between an Indian horse and an Assyrian type. Besides, the tradition of building up pillars (Vrsadhvaja, Minadhvaja Hamsadhvaja etc.) was prevalent in pre-Asokan days among those early Indians who wanted to earn religious merit. Thus the question of foreign influence on Asokan art should be considered with some limitations. In this connection mention may be made that a

158. Ganguli, Kalyan Kumar, Op.cit., p.277-278.

159. Ganguli, Kalyan Kumar, Op.cit., p.279.

tradition of folk-art grew up parallel and simultaneously with that of the Mauryan court art. The main medium of expression of folk-art was terracotta. There are a few terracotta horses which are roughly dated to this period on purely stylistic ground since their archaeological sequences could not be traced properly. In Patna Museum ¹⁶⁰ there are at least three such specimens. Those were collected from the typesite of Bulandibagh, near Patna. Of these two, one shows the complete figure of a horse with cones for legs; neck and mane in one blunt muzzle, slightly upturned, there is a hole across the mouth; lines, circle, eyes etc. are impressed on upper surface of the body (Fig.3). The other one shows a modelled horse. It has its hair trappings incised with ringlets and strokes and some of its features partly done in applique technique. It has also a hole across the muzzle and in each foot. Possibly it served as a toy cart. A detached terracotta horse's head in Patna museum clearly discloses the loop of rein by which it was harnessed and through schematic skretchings the unknown artist made an attempt to delineate its mane (Fig.4). Bharat Kala Bhavan has in its collection the damaged figure of a horse made in black clay which hails from Mathura. It has a sweeping long neck and a row of schematic incised lines indicating its mane (Fig.5).

160. Takata, Osamu and
Ueno, Teruo,

The Art of India, Vol.I,
Plates 60, 62.

What is interesting in it that on its body there are similar ringlets which we have noticed in the Bulandibagh horses. Impressing ringlets on the body of horses was probably a north Indian characteristic of Maurya-Sunga days since we do not notice such thing on the body of the contemporary Kondapur horse.¹⁶¹ Kondapur has yielded a caparisoned horse, moulded, standing properly saddled and harnessed. The modellers who moulded all these terracottas, appear to have paid greater attention to the outward formations of the animal but they did not care to study the anatomy of horse either standing or running as is witnessed on the Sarnath abacus.

Horse in early Buddhist monuments:

That 'the horse makes rather a poor show as compared with the elephant' in Bharhut railing was aptly remarked by Shri Barua¹⁶² who very closely studied this animal depicted on several occasions on the red sand stone railing of Bharhut. When compared with the galloping horse of Sarnath, the remark made by Shri Barua becomes more clearly established. Of the different classes of the horses depicted on Bharhut railing, horses of superior breed namely 'Valaha' and 'Sindhu' are

161.

See The Art of India and Pakistan - The Catalogue of Royal Academy of Arts Exhibition, 1947-48, Edited by Sir Leigh Ashton, p.33, Pl.23, fig.79.

162. Barua, Benimsdhab,

Barhut-Book II, Jataka Scenes, Calcutta, 1939.

present. Valaha type was represented in connection with the story of sky going horse and Sindhu horses are shown as yoked to royal chariots. A medallion in Bharhut depicts the episode of Valahassa Jataka. In this panel a good looking horse, beautifully harnessed in the usual Bharhut fashion is shown. The way artist carved the back portion of this beast allows us to infer that it is flying through the air, carrying a man who hangs on one side of his tail root, holding with his left hand an arrow shaped object with its head pointed to the sky and extending his right hand towards the outer end of the slantingly out stretched tail of the beast. On the otherhand, a man stands in front, keeping the reins before him and holding them with his hand, and has kept himself apart. ¹⁶³

In the Pali version of the Valahassa Jataka, the horse is described as white all over and should have a beak like crow, and its hair should be similar to that of the 'munja' grass. This horse was known to possess supernatural power, was gifted with human speech and it helped distressed persons in taking them to their homes. Another version of this story is found in the Divyavadana in which the horse is described as the king of its species, healthy, strong, with fully developed senses and capable of uttering speech at the top of his voice. This horse had graciously volunteered to do

163. Barua, Benimadhab, Op.cit., pp.104-105.

to do service to the mankind. In the Pali version, this horse was none other than the Bodhisattva himself, the merciful hero, while in the Avadana the hero is Supriya, the head of the merchants. In the former, the horse saves two hundred fifty ship wrecked merchants including their head. In Bharhut a passenger is seen hanging by the horse's tail and in respect of other details the illustration at Bharhut agrees with the Avadana story. The artist has represented the horse's gift of human speech by the human figure in front.

In the Vidura Pandita Jataka scene at the corner jamb of the northern gate at Bharhut we notice Purnaka who has caught hold of Vidura, carries him off from Indraprastha and ties him to a horse's tail and tries to dash him to death from a mountain precipice so that Vidura's heart could be procured. But in this he failed utterly due to Vidura's intelligent manoeuvre. In the said panel, Purnaka is seen riding on the back of the horse which has lifted its front legs in order to take a big gallop and Vidura is seen frantically holding the tail of the beast. But the artist who carved the theme, has failed to bring in the dramatic tension in the figure of the horse.

On the remains of a corner pillar of Bharhut

164. Majumdar, N.G., Guide to the Sculpture Gallery in Indian Museum, Part I, Early Indian School, Pl.XVIII.

Cunningham detected the partial representation of the Visvan-
tara Jataka. It represents a four horsed chariot with a boy
and a girl led by the hand. The fragment of a Bharhut-railling
post, now preserved in Allahabad Museum also depicts another
portion of the same story. The lower panel shows four horses
of a chariot and three figures to be identified with mendicant
Brahmins to whom the generous prince donated his chariot
(Fig.6). In the second part of the same relief we find an
elephant that was gifted by the prince even though the pros-
perity of a kingdom depended upon its possession. In the lower
panel we again see the prince on a chariot drawn by four
horses.¹⁶⁵

The presence of a Quadriga is once again found to be
present in connection with another Jataka story. The story
relates that the Bodhisattva from his earliest infancy gave
evidence of his resolution that he knew nothing of this world
and feigned to be dumb, deaf and paralysed. In the Bharhut
panel he is seen lying stiff in the lap of his father, the
king of Benares. The king orders his charioteer to drive him
out of the town and bury him dead or alive. Thus we find at
the bottom of the relief Prince Semiya standing near the empty
quadriga while the charioteer is preparing his grave. However,

165. Chandra, Pramod, Stone Sculptures in the Allahabad
Museum - a descriptive catalogue
American Institute of Indian Studies,
Publication No.2, 1970, Pl.47a and
47b and also see Kala, S.C., Bharhut
Vedika, Pl.4 and Pl.6.

at this stage Semiya speaks and becomes an ascetic.¹⁶⁶
Chariots drawn by horses in Bharhut panels are not shown only
in connection with the Jataka stories. In the so called
Prasenjita pillar we find the king in a chariot drawn by four
horses abreast (Fig.7). The horses are gaily caparisoned with
lofty plumes and plaited manes. That the kings frequently
used horse-driven chariots can again be established by the
fragment of a railing from Bharhut in the collection of Freer
Gallery of Art in Washington. This panel shows king Virudhava
visiting Buddha. To the right under a tree, we see the front
part of a chariot drawn by two caparisoned horses. In the
chariot a king is seated, his royal umbrella held by an
invisible attendant who is concealed by the charioteer. The
king rises his hand in a gesture of command. To the left the
hind quarters of a caparisoned horse are seen disappearing
through the gateway (Fig.8).¹⁶⁷

Two more fragmentary reliefs in Allahabad Museum
show horse riders. In one, a saddled horse is shown simply in
walking attitude but unfortunately the head of horse is
missing while in the second one a headless rider is shown
riding a galloping horse with a violent onward rush, while
Dr. Kala points to a third semicircular panel indicating only

166. Foucher, A., The Beginnings of Buddhist Art, pp.56-57,
Pl.V, 6.

167. Lippe, Aschwin, The Freer Indian Sculptures Freer Gallery
of Art, Oriental Studies, No.8,
Washington, 1970 (Pl.4).

the head of a horse.¹⁶⁸ This head is carved in high relief and is composed in profile. The heavy lower jaw of this animal is opened and has thus exposed its teeth. Its neck is comparatively narrow and has a big eye. From its expression it appears that artist showed it as being charged in high tension.

On the north gateway we find an interesting figure of Camda[^] yakhi[^] (Chandra[^]-yakshi[^]) in association with Yaksha Kuvera. Chandra[^] stands gracefully (Fig.9) on a horse faced makara (for details see Appendix). Barua has tentatively identified another uninscribed female riding on a well caparisoned horse as 'madhyamakoka'.¹⁶⁹ That the horse riding was prevalent among the women can be proved by a female flag-bearer who rides a horse and bears an emblem of 'garudadhvaaja'.¹⁷⁰ Though the animal has sadly lost its head, its remaining portions are sufficient to allow us to describe it as a horse. 'The scene is carved in such a way that the pillar being turned round, it will appear as if it stood on outer face of the First Pillar to complete the tail of procession'.¹⁷¹

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168. Chandra, Pramod, Op.cit., Pls.XXII, 60 and XXIII, 65 and Dr. S.C.Kala's Bharhut Védika, Pl.30.
 169. Banerjee, J.N., Development of Hindu Iconography, p.369 and also see Coomaraswamy, Yaksha, Vol.II, Pl.10, fig.1 and plate 43, fig.2.
 170. Bachhofer, Ludwig, Early Indian Sculpture, Vol.I, Paris, MCM, XXIX, Plate 22.
 171. Barua, Benimadhab, Bharhut, Book 1, p.15.

On another occasion we find a horseman mounted on the back of a caparisoned horse who has narrowed the loop of the reins so as to restrain the horses in motion and make him halt. In his right hand he holds a garuda-dhvaja (Fig.10). The same attitude is found to be present on the horses right foreleg. Thus the representation is one of a scene of arrival of the royal procession on the site of the mound in which the casket was to be deposited.

In this way we find quite a good number of horses depicted on the stone railings of Bharhut but when a comparison is made between this animal and the carved elephants in the same complex, we notice the representations of elephants are more free in their movement, more natural in their playful pursuits and more graceful in their attitudes. Represented either in motion or without movement, horses in Bharhut are somewhat stiff and lack natural animation.

Dr. Agrawala identified a frieze in the upper storey varandah of Rānīgūmpha in Udaigiri Khandagiri complex near Bhuvaneswar in Orissa as displaying the story of King Dusshanta's visit to the hermitage of sage Kanva where he fell in love at first sight with Sakuntalā (Fig.11). In the beginning of this narrative panel the king is shown as arriving with his soldiers; his presence is indicated by a

horse with empty back followed by an attendant holding a flywhisk and an umbrella, the two signs of royalty.¹⁷² The horse in Ranigumpha is shown walking slowly. Although the relief is damaged considerably, yet whatever is still left, allow us to note that in plastic quality this horse is more naturalistic than the horses in Bharhut and may be classed as belonging to the same type as similar horses found at Sanchi. Ofcourse both Ranigumpha and Sanchi (Stupa No.1 & No.3) reliefs are slightly later in date than the Bharhut carvings.

Before analysing the Sanchi reliefs in detail, a detached voluted capital in the collection of Archaeological Museum, Sarnath of about the same age as the carvings of Sanchi, may be discussed. This 1st century B.C. relief represents a galloping horse with a rider (Fig.12). The rider by his left hand is controlling the loop of the rein while his right hand holds something like a whip with which he is shown as ready to whip his mount. The head of the horse is partially damaged. Its mane is shown with shallow incised schematic lines. The front legs of this animal are shown in the manner of a galloping speed. The hind part of the animal does not show much of the dynamic movement that we witness in the front. Possibly the artist had not been able to do

172. Agrawala, V.S., Vasavadatta and Sakuntala Scenes in the Ranigumpha Cave of Orissa, JISOA, Vol.XVI, 1946, p.108.

full justice to the space at his disposal. He appears to have been compelled to restrict any movement that he might have wanted to show. Rest of the panel is covered with floral decorations. Possibly the unknown artist wanted to indicate that the rider was passing through a wood.

The railings and gateways of Sanchi stupa number one, two and three have laid bare the presence of horses in many poses and attitudes. Of all the Buddhist narratives, the story of the Great Departure of Bodhisattva was obviously given the most careful handling in so far as the treatment of horse was concerned since Kanthaka the faithful horse of the master had played a vital role in the story itself. The oldest of Sanchi panels is probably the relief on the balustrade on the terrace of Stupa No.3 composed simply of a horse without harness, outlined against the bare background of the medallion. The scene fully realises the schematic and abstract character which the earliest productions of Buddhist art certainly assumed. In one of the medallions on a pillar in the same place we find a rosette of lotus surmounting the horse.¹⁷³

In fact upon the Southern and Eastern Gateways at Sanchi (Stupa No.1), we see the horse Kanthaka, all saddled

173. Marshall, Sir John,
Foucher, Alfred and
Majumdar, N.G.,

The Monuments of Sanchi,
Vol.I, cf. plate 8b, 7, 11 etc.
and see page 186 for details.

and bridled and before him the groom Chhandaka holding the umbrella in both his hands. He has no hand left for the other traditional accessory, the ewer and that is why this is placed on the ground between the horses feet. Finally there can be no doubt about the miracle since 'the artist has suspended one of the Kinnaras bearing garlands in the sky while the other garland and two rosettes (suggesting rain of flowers ?) complete the medallion'. It is 'a complete picture of the mahabhiniskramana, as complete, at least as the procedure ... and even the sculptor of the Eastern Gateway can find nothing to add but a graphic indication of the town and the retinue of gods'.

On the middle architrave of the Eastern Gateway, we find a more elaborate narration of Bodhisattva's 'Great Departure'. We see Kanthaka shown as many as four times going right from the left. The first depicts the horse in the halfway through the city gate of Kapilavastu (Fig.13). The last of the four horses was stopped and together with the groom is shown taking leave of his Master. This is shown by a huge pair of foot prints shaded by a flywhisk and an umbrella. Below this, we find the two inseparable appendages of this scene, i.e., the horse Kanthaka and groom Chhandaka who are shown as groomily returning to the town. The horses are adorned with rich and cleverly made trappings from the

headstall to the crupper, including the embroidered carpet which serves for saddle. The four fold representations of the horse going out from right to left, to some, remind us of the Four Drives of Buddhisattva before deciding to renounce in quest of attaining nirvana. This carvings on the architrave of the Eastern Gateway betrays one fact very clearly that in composing the horse's movement from the right to left, the sculptor had to face some uneasyness. But he was successful in stressing the predominance of horses. Against the multitudes of vertical lines in which many figures were carved these four huge horizontals (i.e. the figure of horses) have given greater force in the theme as well as in composition.

Before proceeding to the other events of Sanchi reliefs, some observations in relation to this animal and its peculiar compositions may be made here. We find in Sanchi chariots which are drawn either by two horses or by four horses and in certain cases it is noticed that horse's tail is tied with the saddle (kaksha), so that in time of great speed the tail did not get tangled with the wheels (Fig.14).¹⁷⁴ In Sanchi a horse with two heads has been found to be carved. The reason, as Dr. Kramrisch rightly observes, was apparently

174. Joshi, N.P., Bharat Ke Prachin Rath, Kala-Nidhi(in Hindi), Varsha 5, Anka - 1, Quarterly Journal, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras Hindu University.

to let those appear from outside and inside the gates as complete animal.¹⁷⁵ The unknown carvers at Sanchi also incorporated figures of 'Asvamukhi Yakshi', Kinnara with equine element, etc. (see Appendix for detail). In one place the artist is found to have given the mounted horse a human head.

Horses with riders and horses yoked to chariots have been shown in many reliefs at Sanchi. The middle lintel of the South Gate shows Asoka's visit to the Ramagrama stupa. Asoka rides a chariot drawn by two horses and he is accompanied by his three retinues on horse back. In the middle section of the lower architrave of the North Gate we find the presence of Quadriga in connection with the Visvantara Jataka. Noble horse riders with their richly plumed and harnessed horses with 'Srivatsa' marks on their chest are shown in Sanchi in the false capital of the west end of the North Gate. King Prasenjita and his viceroy on horse back are shown on the North Gate as they are proceeding to the site of the Great Miracle, the place was in between the Jetavana vihara and the city. On the west end of the upper middle architrave of the South Gate at Sanchi we find two horses couchant, back to back with richly plumed head stalls and girths trimmed with discs. The horse facing left is, in both cases, ridden by a king (note the turban), accompanied on the right hand

175. Kramrisch, The Representation of Nature in Early
Dr. Stella, Buddhist Sculpture, (Bharhut and Sanchi),
Rupam, No.8, October, 1921.

horse by his viceroy above and his queen below (see Monuments of Sanchi, Vol.II, Pl.12). Carvings of stallions passant may be seen in the north end of the Western Gate at Sanchi (Fig.15). The horse riders had to use padded saddle cloth on the back of their horses (see rider on false capital at the south end of the Western Gate at Sanchi). That the cavalry was a very important wing in the army in ancient India, can also be established from the details found at Sanchi. There are representations of soldiers mounted on horse back and upon horse driven chariots to be found in the back view of the middle architrave on Western Gateway as well as on the back of the bottom architrave on the South Gateway at Sanchi. Thus it is found that the great repertoire of Sanchi has laid bare before us a wide cross section of Indian life of the contemporary age in which the horse had a place of considerable importance and wide popularity. There are ordinary horses used as mounts, yoked to chariots, as draw animals or having divine affiliation (Kanthaka). There are also horses having fantastic hybridity of equine body (Asvamukhi and Centaur etc.). Horse drawn chariots ridden by both men and women, kings and nobles on horse back, horse in war and horse with detail of its out-fit are to be met with in many reliefs at Sanchi. Though in plastic qualities the horses at Sanchi depict much more improved version than those of the Bharhut horses yet one misses the speed, the energetic movement, the

galloping attitude of this animal that we have at least once met at Sarnath pillar capital. Here again that notion still holds good that comparatively the elephants in Sanchi are more natural, more realistic and have greater freedom of movement than the horses.

On one of the railings at Bodhgaya there is a one-wheeled chariot drawn by four galloping horses, two going to the left and two going to the right (Fig.16). The horses have waving plumes and are carved in three quarter profiles. The driver, with a turban as his head-gear holds the upper edge of the front frame with his left hand but the way his right hand was carved, indicates that he is controlling the reins by that hand. In this Cunningham noticed the representation of Surya or Sun-god, who is driving a four horsed chariot with two attendant archers shooting arrows from their bows. This has close similarity to the wellknown classical representation of Phoebus Apollo.¹⁷⁶ This view of Cunningham has been challenged by Dr. R.L.Mitra who finds in it the representation of an Indian war chariot.¹⁷⁷

Alexander Cunningham argues his case in this way that there is a definite evidence of Greek influence whenever

176. Cunningham, Sir Alexander, Archaeological Survey Report, 1871-72, p.97.
177. Mitra, Dr. R.L., Buddhagaya, pp.160-161.

there is a restricted number of four horses attached to the chariot. On the other hand the solar chariot in the Indian tradition, has always been represented as being driven by seven horses. In Rgveda he drives seven boys or bright backed steed and in all the Brahmanical sculptures there are seven horses carved on the pedestal shown as driven by Aruna while two attendants on each side shoot golden arrows considered as solar rays. But whence came the four horses ? Cunningham answers, from the Greeks. Cunningham further refers to Homeric hymns which allude to Helios as riding a chariot drawn by four horses - a conception which had emerged much earlier than it is found in India. The learned scholar, moreover, argues that the conception of Helios and his quadriga was known to the Eastern Greeks and it was depicted on the tetradrachme of Platon. Dr. J.N.Banerjee also holds the same view and says 'as regards the Bodhgaya¹⁷⁸ sculpture there can not be any doubt that it stands for the Sun god. Though the representation of this divinity is purely Indian in character, in conception is somewhat analogous to that of the Greeks'.

The above views have been challanged by Dr. Mitra. He defends that 'the premises for which these conclusions have been drawn, are, however, not correct and the conclusions

178. Banerjee, J.N., Indian Antiquary, 1225, p.163.

are consequently wrong' 'the group, he says, 'had nothing to do with the Sun'.

The number and position of the horses are no doubt similar, but bearing in mind that the chariot in Greece and in India was the same in shape, it may be asked whether an artist either Greek or Indian, eventually represented horses in bas-relief in other than profile or three quarter view ? A front of a horse in bas-relief would show only the fore part or must project considerably more than what would any bas-relief admit of; consequently the Greeks generally opted for the profile or three quarter view - in former case ranging the horses in line so as to show the side of one parts of the heads and legs of the others and in the latter case showing the front view of the chariot with half the number of horses running on one side and the other half on an arrangement which militated against all laws of resolution of forces, and which could make the chariot move onwards. This unnatural and awkward position was necessary for the work of art and could not be avoided; and if we find, says Dr. Mitra, allowing for the arguments given above, for a similiar disposition of circumstances in India, we see no reason to assume that it must necessarily imply a borrowing or interchange of art. As a matter of fact the Hindus ranged their horses according to the exigency of their work either in profile, as in most cases of sculpture of the Sunged, ^ASurya, some on one side and some

on the other ,... in the coin of Planton the horses are all on one side. There is little doubt that Homer had alluded to Apollo as he was represented standing on a chariot having two horses on one side and two others on another side. To assume it would be simply gratuitous and even then that argument¹⁷⁹ would not advance at all.

Dr. Mitra argued again that the quadriga was not a typically Greek production. To this he refers to some Buddhist birth stories which refer to chariot drawn by four horses (Chatuvahi yutha ratha chatu sindhavayutha alankata ratha vide Fausboll's Jataka, Vol.VI, pp.510-511 and compare the chariot of the King Prasenjita on Bharhut railing). In this connection, Dr. J.N.Banerjee strongly maintains that the number of horses is no argument at all in deciding the point at issue because the Rgvedic description of the Sungod which is certainly the background of human representations of this divinity in Indian art pointedly refers to the fact of his riding a chariot drawn by one (the horse Etasa), 3, 4, or 7 horses and there can not be any doubt that this conception¹⁸⁰ of this divinity is purely an Indian one.

To Dr. Mitra, the Bodhgaya sculpture represents simply a royal procession as described in Samannaphala Sutta

179. Mitra, Dr. R.L., Buddhagaya, pp.161-163, quoted by Barua, Benimadhab, Barhut, Vol.II, Book II-V, p.86.

180. Barua, Benimadhab, Op.cit., p.89.

(vide [^]Digha Nikaya Vol.I, [^]Sutta No.2) and its commentary by providing the chariot with a charioteer to guide its course as well as amazonian guards to keep off the enemies of its royal owner. The learned scholar does not find any difficulty in interpreting the scene as representation of the story of Sakra's march in a war chariot to destroy demons as contained for instance in Kulavaka Jataka ([^]Fausboll, No.31).

Beside this controversial panel, Bodhgaya has laid bare some more horses in its railings. In three reliefs at Bodhgaya the story of Padakusalamanava Jataka has been narrated in which the yakshi [^]Asvamukhi plays the main role (see Appendix). In certain panels Barua has rightly detected depictions of Lunar Asterism. In this regard Barua remarks that 'it may be safely assumed that strictly speaking the name of the head star is [^]Asvini and that of the whole asterism ¹⁸¹Asva' ([^]Fig.61). Of the two Bodhgaya representations that survive among the lingering remnants of the old stone railing, one is in the form of a horse and the other that of an antelope. This gives to prove that what Mr. Barua inferred, was right. In the case of horse in Bodhgaya we find the profile of a winged horse in galloping attitude. The figure of this animal (see Barua, op.cit., fig.44a) is carved in the background of a lotus (Fig.61). However, it is very difficult to infer

181. Barua, Benimadhab, Gaya and Buddhagaya, figs.66a, 66b and 66c.

whether all the lunar asterisms were depicted on Bodhgaya[^] railing since what we get, is only a fragment and not the entire railing.

On the walls of Bhaja^{^ ^} caves in western India the presence of horses is quite conspicuous. In the corner panel, on the right of the cave no.XX at Bhaja^{^ ^}, one can see an elaborate composition. The foreground of this panel is occupied by a huge pot bellied demon in crouching pose. At the top, in the centre is represented a chariot drawn by four horses. A royal figure is shown seated on chariot with two female attendants, one holding an umbrella and the other a chowri (Fig.17).¹⁸²

Regarding the identification of this panel at Bhaja^{^ ^}, scholars have put forward contradictory opinions. Burgess identified the relief as 'Surya[^] driving through the sky with his attendants and destroying the evil powers of darkness'. This identification was further supported by¹⁸³ Coomaraswamy and Saraswati. Dr. Agrawala attempted to identify the scene as depicting 'the visit of Mandhata^{^ ^ ^} to

182. Ghyan, R.G., Identification of the so called Surya[^] and Indra Figures in Cave No.20 of the Bhaja group, Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, 1950-51, No.1, p.17.

183. See JISOA, Vol.II, 1939, pp.1-7 and Coomaraswamy's History of Indian and Indonesian Art, p.25 and S.K.Saraswati's Survey of Indian Sculpture, p.24.

the Uttara Kuru country' ¹⁸⁴ - in which the principal figure is king Mandhata himself distinguished by two royal emblems. To clarify his identification, Dr. Agrawala refers to the Divyavadana story in which it is stated that the wheels of Mandhata's chariot moved over the bodies of the demons who obstructed his ways (asuram upari vaihayasam ratho gachchhita). E.H. Johnston attempts to co-relate this particular scene as ¹⁸⁵ depicting the war between Sakra and Asuras as described in the Samyukta Nikaya (I. 224-225). The story was later on included in Sakra Jataka No.9 of Sura's Jatakamala and in the Kulavaka Jataka No.31 of the Pali version. Johnston points out that the chariot is drawn by four horses abreast and has two wheels. To him, these facts alone are sufficient to negative the identification with Surya. He further comments that in most cases of Surya images 'the horses are shown, not abreast but drawn apart to each side, so as to make it apparent that the chariot has a single wheel. This method has led to some misconceptions; for by it the sculptors were unable to show all seven horses can be seen but it must not therefore be inferred that Surya was ever held in his chariot by less than seven horses, but only that the disposition of the figures made it impossible to indicate the presence of seven steeds. At Mathura in Kushana art Surya is

184. Agrawala, Dr. V.S., Indian Art, pp.191-192.

185. Johnston, E.H., Two Buddhist Scenes at Bhaja, JISOA, Vol.VII, 1939, pp.3-4.

shown with two or four horses, as in the image of Khair Khanek (near Kabul); but from the Gupta period onwards [^]Surya's car was generally drawn by seven horses as in the Vedic and Puranic traditions.

In this connection, it may not be out of place to mention two more [^]Surya figures in terracotta which belongs almost to the same period. One of these is a round plaque in which a royal person ([^]Surya) is shown controlling the reins of four galloping horses of a one wheeled chariot (Fig.18).¹⁸⁶ This Patna Museum plaque also includes an arrow shooting figure who is moulded to the left side of the main figure. Conceived in very low relief, this plaque definitely betrays the skill which the unknown terracotta artist of Sunga period had attained. The other terracotta [^]Surya image is in the collection of Asutosh Museum of Indian Art which hails from the site of Chandraketugarh of 24 Parganas. It is conceived in the form of a toy-cart in which the Sungod flanked by two female attendants is shown driving a chariot drawn by four horses. But the terracotta in Patna Museum is superior in technique and treatment than that of the terracotta of Asutosh Museum. The horses in Asutosh Museum are very crudely conceived with the least possible attempt in showing either any animation or natural plasticity. What is interesting in it is that the

186. Takata Osamu and Ueno Teruo, The Art of India, Vol.I, Pl.61.

folk artist by the time of the Sungas also started shaping gods and followed the religious prescriptions in this regard as much as possible.

Besides the controversial Surya image at Bhājā,¹⁸⁷ the presence of horse in another composition has been detected by Coomaraswamy to the side and lower panel adjacent to the lattice window depicting demons being trampled by a horseman. In the lower panel a demoness is holding a hand axe in her right hand. A demon is by her side holding a knife in his right hand and is shown being trampled by a horse. On another panel there is another demon with huge belly squatting on the ground over which is scene the figure of a rider on a richly caparisoned horse. His feet are resting on the stirrups.¹⁸⁷

Horse in Jaggayyapeta, Amaravati¹⁸⁸ and in Nagarjunikonda¹⁸⁸:

Of the panels found at Jaggayyapeta, mention may be made of two interesting pieces which have representation of horses shown on the surface. In one panel the principal figure has been identified as king Mandhātā¹⁸⁸ shown as a Chakravartin. Herein we notice a horse on a platform

187. Coomaraswamy, A.K., History of Indian and Indonesian Art, Pl.III, 4 and Pl.VII, fig.26.
188. Zimmer, H., The Art of Indian Asia, Pl.37.

properly saddled and bridled (Fig.19), included as one of the jewels of the Chakravartin[^]. The horse here is (a 'valaha'[^] type as suggested by Dr. Sivaramamurti) in fact not a real horse but a wooden toy horse. Like the elephant (another jewel in the same panel), the horse reflects a sort of still life study of the beast as such. The second panel at Jaggayyapeta shows a yakshini[^] standing on a horse with fish-tail as we have already noticed in the case of Chandra Yakshi[^] in Bharhut (cf. Appendix).

In Amaravati[^], horses are found to have been carved in standing, walking and galloping attitudes. Sometimes they are shown with riders. Like the Jaggayyapeta, Amaravati[^] sculptors also carved the figure of Chakravarti[^] ruler where a horse is shown as one of the important accompaniments of the king. Besides, the figures of horses are found to have been displayed in the so called 'Moon Stone', in the scene of the Great Departure of Bodhisattva and it is carved in relating certain Jataka stories. A lime stone panel with 'chakravartin'[^] theme is in the collection of Musee Guimet in Paris.¹⁸⁹ In this damaged panel a horse is shown near the right leg of the king. The horse is seen standing in a little uneasy manner, its hind legs are bent and an extra precaution appears to have been taken to compose the tail within a

189. Auboyer, Jeannine, Landmarks of the World Art, The Oriental Art, Paul Hamlyn Publication, London, 1967, Pl.10.

minimum of space by the side of a pilaster. This saddled horse is seen standing timidly. The British Museum panel from Amaravati¹⁹⁰ with the same theme is shown in two registers. In these two panels fore parts of horses are shown. Of these two horses, the head of the upper one is bent and is shown fitted with saddle loop while the horse in the lower panel is looking towards the seated Raja Chakravarti¹⁹¹.

In another panel in British Museum, we find the presence of horse, which possibly depicts as Barrett thinks, Siddhartha¹⁹¹ asking leave of Chhandaka, his groom and Kanthaka, his horse. Barrett was not sure about the correct identification of this theme and that is why he said it could also be representing Vidhurapandita as preaching to the Nagas¹⁹¹. To the present writer the former identification appears more convincing wherein we find nicely saddled and properly bridled Kanthaka sadly looking towards Bodhisattva with monk's dress and with a halo and Chhandaka as kneeling down before taking leave of his master. British Museum has also a panel from Amaravati¹⁹¹ which shows the event of Great Departure (Fig.20). This relief depicts Siddhartha¹⁹¹ as sitting on the back of walking Kanthaka whose hoofs are being held by four dwarfish yakshas and his groom is holding an umbrella with a long

190. Barrett, Dauglas, Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum, Plate VI.
 191. Barrett, Dauglas, Op.cit., Pl.XV.

shaft. Kanthaka is very simply saddled and Bodhisattva is seen controlling by his left hand the horse's rein. The unknown sculptor took extreme care in presenting his horse which appears to be extremely cautious in its movements during its final escape. There are a few fragments more which show the Chakravarti theme partially. Of these one shows the huge fore parts of a horse. Here the horse is shown as held by a groom who holds a rope which comes through its nose. The partial view of its rein loop is still visible. The front left leg of the animal is twisted in conformity with the composition of the legs of the attending male and female figures shown in the same panel.

In another damaged Rajachakravarti panel from Amaravati again the fore part of a horse is seen but this time the panel is carved with low depth. The looped face of the horse is seen almost touching the wheel which is another symbol of a 'Rajachakravarti' ruler (vide Barrett, op.cit., XVI). Soldiers on horse back and without stirrup are found on the reliefs of Amaravati (vide Barrett, op.cit., Pl.XXIV).

Madras Government Museum has also a very good collection of Amaravati sculptures in which on several occasions we meet the animal under discussion. In one panel, Kanthaka is seen proceeding from Kapilavastu attended by gods and dwarfs, the latter supporting the legs of the horse

192
Kanthaka. In another panel the same theme is repeated. But curiously enough we miss the dwarfs who hold the hoofs; instead, we find a rocky ground which nowhere in Indian sculpture is met with and this element makes the identification of the theme somewhat inconclusive. Here within a medallion a horse (much damaged) with rider (the legs of whose are now lingering) is shown trotting on a rocky ground accompanied by a groom (also damaged).¹⁹³ In another panel of the same museum we find a horse whose rider is much mutilated and has lost almost all shape except for his feet which just touch the head of the first of the two dwarfs below. And finally we find in one panel at Amaravati[^] the presence of Bodhisattva is indicated by a saddle cloth over which Chhandaka is shown holding a royal parasole (Fig.21). Thus we find that artists at Amaravati[^] sometimes indicated the presence of the Bodhisattva on the back of his horse symbolically and in some cases they showed Bodhisattvas anthropomorphic forms on the back of the horse to depict the event of Great Departure. Mr. T.N. Ramachandran takes this as representing Prince Siddhartha's flight on his horse Kanthaka whose hoofs are¹⁹⁴ caught by Yakshas to avoid the least sound as he escaped.

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192. Sivaramamurti, C., Bulletin Madras Government Museum General Section, Vol.IV, Madras, 1942, Pl.XIV, fig.4.
193. Sivaramamurti, C., Ibid., Pl.LVIII, fig.5, p.177.
194. Sivaramamurti, C., Ibid., Pl.XXIX, fig.1.

Kalidasa in his *Raghuvamśa* VII.37 described the nature of a righteous warfare (dharma-yuddha) which goes very similar to a 2nd cent. A.D. relief coping of Amaravati relief in the collection of Madras Government Museum, where we find foot soldier attacking foot soldier, one chariot attacks another chariot, one cavalryman attacks another on horse back, the soldier on elephant charges another on elephant; thus equally matched are the opponents the battle starts.¹⁹⁵ The representation of the approaching war over the relics of Buddha is also shown partially on a panel from Amaravati, now in the collection of Madras Government Museum.¹⁹⁶ In this theme participating horses are carved in very low relief. Both manes and tails are schematically composed and the flatness in depth points to the fact that the sculpture was done in the earlier phase of Amaravati. The onward movements of the horses are shown arrested by the borders and thus they have become stilled in their onward rush. The artists at Amaravati studied horses in various ways and winged horses are also to be met with at Amaravati. Dr. Amita Ray remarks that animals 'are without doubt represented somewhat conventionally' on Amaravati reliefs, 'as one would find in archaic west Asian style (the winged animal is frankly a west Asian art motif) that had already penetrated Indian art'.¹⁹⁷ But what is

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195. Sivaramamurti, C., Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, p.80, f.n.2.
 196. Kramrisch, Stella, The Art of India, London, 1954, Pl.28. A.R., A.S.I., 1908-1909, Pl.XXIX.
 197. Ray, Dr. Amita, Sculptures of Nagarjunikonda, Marg, Vol.XVIII, No.2, March 1965, p.37.

unmistakable in the relief is the easy flow, the linear movement of animal figures and the relatively free dramatic movement of the animal drivers and the soft plastic treatment of the contours of the animal.

'The animals at Nāgarjunikonda', according to Dr. Ray 'are a joy for ever - whether it is a horse in slow gallop or a running antelope or a hopping bear etc.'. ¹⁹⁸ The animals are treated with evident naturalism and with an amount of abstraction'. The modelling in most cases, is generalised to bring in the essential of respective forms. The animals betray a soft plastic effect with full roundity of forms and Dr. Ray feels that the composition of Kanthaka to certain extent derived its inspiration from the Gandhara reliefs. More than one reliefs were carved in Nāgarjunikonda to depict the event of mahabhinishkramana. The traditional participants are found to be always there in Nāgarjunikonda; they are Bodhisattva on the back of Kanthaka, being led by the groom Chandaka and the dwarfs are found to be carrying hoofs of the horse. On a round medallion at Nāgarjunikonda we find besides these an attendant at the back holding an umbrella and the medallion is flanked by mithuna couples (Fig.22). What is fascinating in this composition is that the carver has brought in an effective and rhythmic play of light and shade. In another relief, dealing in the same theme, the

198. Ray, Dr. Amita, Ibid., p.40.

unknown artist added some new elements and told the story in a greater detail. The composition includes Mara's army in the attitude of resisting Bodhisattva's departure. The galloping horse appears to be slightly nervous and its facial expression reveals that it did not expect to face such obstruction.¹⁹⁹

Another square panel from the same site with the same theme shows the figures of divine beings who were witnessing the departure of Gautama. The skill and subtlety with which this panel was carved calls for comparison with the contemporary ivory carving.²⁰⁰ And finally in another relief Chhandaka is seen divulging the news of Bodhisattva's whereabouts to his parents and relatives where the horse takes a corner position and is sadly stooping down with a heavy heart. Besides, horse is also found to have been carved in profile and in galloping attitude on the rim of a Moon stone at Nagarjunikonda.

Horse in western Indian caves:

Although not very prominently shown, the presence of horse has been detected in some western Indian caves namely Pitalkhora, Bedsa and Karle. Of these places, the mithuna couple on horse at the top of a pillar inside the chaitya of Karle is very interesting. Facing the pillars from the nave

199. Takata Osamu and Op.cit., Pl.173.

Ueno Tenuo,

200. Ray, Dr. Amita,

Op.cit., Pl.41.

See also Pl.I, fig.I, Lalit Kala Nos.3-4, April 1956 and cf. the Editorial on The Date of Karle Chaitya.

it is the fourteenth pillar from the entrance and almost hidden from the view unless closely observed. In this composition the artist seems to have concentrated much in revealing the facial expression - an expression which clarifies that the beast is bearing a heavy load on its back. It might also be the intention of the sculptor to include horse in such a mithuna theme which he possibly felt would increase the atmosphere of passion or sex. In Bedsa cave, male and female riders are seen on the back of addorsed horses ('haya sanghata', the term for such figures coined by Dr. Agrawala).

In a 2nd-3rd century A.D. Buddhist relief at Kanheri (now in the collection of Prince of Wales Museum), the event of Bodhisattva's tonsure has been depicted (Fig.23). Bodhisattva is shown seated in maharaja lilasana under a tree on stone seat. To his left the figures Chhandaka with folded hands in kneel-down position and properly saddled Kanthaka have been carved. The entire relief has been conceived without much depth and the Bodhisattva appears to be charged with the 'fierceness of resolve' while the 'pathos of parting' covers the faces of the groom and the horse.

Horse in Gandharan art:

In Gandhara and its neighbouring region, the predominant religious creed in the early centuries of Christian era

was Buddhism and in the narrative art of this region thus we find the legends of Buddha carved in an elaborate manner. Of the narrative panels from Gandhara mention may be made of a very interesting scene which was formerly in the Lahore Museum and is now in the Karachi Museum. It shows the birth of Chhandaka and Kanthaka (Fig.24). According to the legends they were born on the same day and at the same time as that of Gautama. This relief shows a number of horses peering over a wall in a royal stable. At the left of the panel we find the father of Chhandaka, the boy who is to become Siddhartha's groom and at the right his mother. His mother is in the attitude of nursing him, while Chhandaka's father feeds a mare which in its turn is suckling her foal Kanthaka.²⁰¹ The same theme is depicted in another panel which is now in the collection of Indian Museum, Calcutta. The panel is divided into two halves. The right half shows the head of a horse at the top and below a man is seen feeding a mare and a little colt suckling her, representing the birth of Kanthaka. To the left, the upper portion projects the head of a horse while the bottom is occupied by an infant seated on a stool and is being bathed by a woman. This represents the birth of Chhandaka. Both these reliefs have feeling of domestic tenderness and the atmospheres which they project are quite homely.²⁰²

201. Inghlot, Harold, Gandhara Art in Pakistan, Pl.19.
202. Majumdar, N.G., A Guide to Sculptures in the Indian Museum, Part II, Pl.18.

The event of Renunciation has been very faithfully portrayed in one of the panels hailing from Sahri Bahlol which is now in the collection of Pesawar Museum. This panel represents Yasodhara[^], the wife of Siddhartha[^], sleeping on a couch, guarded by a Yavani[^]. Siddhartha[^] has stepped down on the foot stool of the bed and is about to mount Kanthaka, the horse, which as it appears from the panel, has been brought into the bed room itself by the groom Chhandaka. The predominant mood in this composition is obviously very sad, and this has also touched the emotion of the horse who has been bearing a very pensive mood.

By far, the greatest number of horses carved in the narrative art of Gandhara in depicting the scene of the Great Departure of the Bodhisattva. Of the many panels one is in the collection of Indian Museum, Calcutta where Siddhartha[^] is shown passing through the city gate on his favourite horse Kanthaka; his groom Chhandaka holds an umbrella over his head 'and two yakshas lift up Kanthaka by the hoofs as narrated in the story, lest there should be noise'. The same theme in the Lahore Museum has been found to be treated in a different manner. In this panel Bodhisattva is seen passing through the palace gate on the back of Kanthaka. At the gate the guards are fleeing, stands a kingly form with nimbus, the divinity (perhaps) of the palace gate 'dvare[^]

adivāttha devata' while in another panel Siddhartha and his horse are represented in profile as leaving the city. In the foreground of this panel Chhandaka appears holding the royal umbrella. Curiously enough, a panel in Lahore Museum, while depicting the miraculous escape of the Bodhisattva two females are shown as supporting the hoofs of Kanthaka (vide Journal of Indian Art, Vol.VIII(1898) Pl.22(1)). Of the many Gandhara panels, in one occasion the Bodhisattva is seen on the back of his properly saddled horse Kanthaka whose hoofs are lifted by two Yakshas. At the back of the horse Chhandaka the groom, is seen holding an umbrella and at the top of Chhandaka, the bust of Vajrapani (?) is noticed. In front there are five figures including a woman and a nimbate deity. The horse is relieved in profile with a smooth body, lofty plumes, long organised tail and has very carefully dressed manes (Fig.25).

A Karachi Museum relief shows a man is leading a covered wagon drawn by two horses. Inside the wagon one catches the glimpse of Mayadevi partially who is possibly returning to Kapilavastu with Siddhartha but here Siddhartha in front is shown as big in size as his mother (Fig.26). Almost in similar way a Gandharan panel in Indian Museum, Calcutta, shows Mayadevi with baby Siddhartha in her arms

proceeding on a wagon but this time the wagon is drawn by bullocks and not by horses.²⁰⁴ A third relief which hails from Jamal Garhi, now kept in Lahore Museum shows *Māyādevī* being carried on a litter by four men. She holds the child in her lap; the litter is preceded by mounted guards. These guards are carved in the three quarter profile while the horses are conceived in strict profiles. The identification of this relief is not very sure, specially the explanation of the content inside the trefoil designed litter. Foucher identifies the same as an abbreviated rendering of *Māyādevī* with her child. This hypothesis was confirmed by a relief acquired by the Baltimore Museum of Art.²⁰⁵ The presence of horse can also be traced in the bridal procession of *Siddhartha's* marriage, now in Lahore Museum.²⁰⁶

Of the various ways by which *Siddhartha's* Great Departure was carved, at least on one occasion the Earth Goddess has been represented as bearing upon her shoulder the feet of the horse *Kanthaka*. *Kanthaka* evidently stood on the shoulder of *Mahaprithivi* (*Sthāvarā*). Under *Gautama's* horse the much destroyed upper part of the Goddess is seen emerging out of the earth. In *Avidure Nidana* it is said that when *Gautama* desired once more to look back upon the city, the wish has

204. Majumdar, N.G., Op.cit., p.40.

205. Bingham, John, A Collection of Gandhara Sculpture, No.XIII.

206. Inghlot, Harold, Op.cit., Pl.34.

hardly arisen in his mind, when the Great Earth (Pali Mahapathavi, Skt. Mahaprithivi) turned round like a wheel as if to say 'thou needest not to turn round in order to look and so let him see the town once more'.²⁰⁷ In the said panel we notice two phases, one of which is entirely done in accordance with the compositional point of view. It appeared to the artist quite irregular to place the horse in the side representing thereby merely the fore-feet on a supporting female figure (Prithivi) and as such he places the hind legs on another figure who has, of-course, no relation in the story itself. The Lorian Tongai relief of the same theme has two yakshas for bearing the legs of the horse, literary reference to which is to be sought in Chinese Buddha Charita.

The return of Chhandaka and Kanthaka to Kapilavastu was another favourite theme to the Gandhara sculptors. There are atleast two reliefs in Lahore Museum in one of which Chhandaka is seen as receiving turban and jewels from Gautama before bidding the latter a sad farewell while Kanthaka is shown as being stooped down to kiss the feet of the Bodhisattva and licked hot tears (Fig.27). The unknown Gandharan artist appears to have been successful in portraying the underlying pathos of the theme in the countenances of the participants in the relief. There are two reliefs in the collection of

207. Davids, Rhys, Buddhist Birth Stories, p.84.

Indian Museum, Calcutta. A crudely designed panel in Indian Museum is seen divided into two parts. In one part is to be found Gautama, riding on the back of his mount, while the other part is devoted to showing the departure of Kanthaka and Chhandaka. In another relief of the same museum Siddhartha has been depicted in the action of giving away his belongings to his groom while the horse had stooped down to kiss the feet of the Bodhisattva. A Lahore Museum panel (Fig.28) shows Chhandaka as entering through a city gate bringing back with him the jewels, the umbrella, the turban and the horse, while the eager city women are shown peeping through their balconies and watching their return. The Gandhara artist who composed this theme deserves appreciation specially for the way he has carved the entry of the horse Kanthaka through the gate. The psychological set back for conveying the sad news to the parent of Bodhisattva, has been very aptly projected in their faces and in their nervous looks. After the Mahaparinirvana of Buddha, his sacred relics were transported according to the legend to several places. Receptient 'Sakyas' of different places of origin took away Buddha's relics to their final resting places. A Lahore Museum panel shows two men as carrying the relics, one of them rides a horse while the second one a camel. In another panel of the same museum, the relics are shown as being given to a man who is found to be riding an elephant and he is being escorted by two horse riders. A Jamal

Garhi relief, now in Peshawar shows the story of the Punishment of Maitra kanyaka. Seated on his horses Maitra-kanyaka appears to be asking for some informations with a club in his hand, not unlike Herakles. His roaming spirit led him on and came out at last to a hell where those sons who strike their mothers are punished.²⁰⁸

Besides Buddha stories, the Gandhara artists are also found to connect the horse with other elements, namely the Centaurs and the Dioscuri. There is a Centaur in Lahore Museum which once decorated the base of a stupa. In Karachi Museum, there is a stone tray that represents the Dioscuri. The rim of this tray is decorated with the leaf pattern. A relief of two Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux riding to the right occupies approximately three fifth of the area in the centre. Such divine twins were popular also in India and in ancient Near East. The mounted Dioscuri are also found to have been struck by Eucratides I and Diomedes in their coins. Reference should also be made of a [^]Surya image which hails from Khair-Khaneh, twelve miles north of Kabul, where a [^]Brahmanical temple with the statue of [^]Surya in white marble was exposed. [^]Surya is shown squatting in [^]lalitasana between his acolytes Danda and Pingala on a chariot drawn by two horses and between the horses is shown seated the charioteer Aruna, shown without legs and as holding the reins. Finally attention may be drawn to a foliated pattern which belongs to this region and in which

the foliage emerges from the mouth of a human mask shown in profile, the cranium of which is prolonged into the neck and head of a horse; just below this mask appears a duck's head. It is really very interesting to meet here an example of those grylls of Greek art, in which human faces surmounted by heads of animals associated with the heads of winged creatures (Fig.29)²⁰⁹. Whether in black or blue schist, horses in Gandhara were carved in greater depth with careful attention towards the rounded plasticity and rhythmic dispositions of the contours. Whether coming out from a city gate, or moving in the void the unknown artists who worked in the Gandhara region appear to have imbibed some inspirations from the Hellenistic world specially in the treatment of the anatomy of horses and in displaying its various movements.

Horse in Kushana-Mathura art:

Mathura, a great centre of ancient art in India, particularly during the ruling period of the Imperial Kushanas, produced many master pieces. In or around Mathura innumerable sculptures either related to Hinduism, Buddhism or to Jain pantheon have been collected and are scattered now in many museums of India and abroad. Among the untold thousands of reliefs, the animal of our issue has been found to be carved

209. Vide Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology,
Vol.XII, 1937, p.32.

in different ways in accordance with the narration of a story or according to the prescriptions laid down by the religious texts. Of the Buddhist narratives represented on the red sand stone railing fragments belonging to Kushana Mathura, mention may be made of a panel now kept in the Indian Museum, Calcutta that depicts partially the episode of Valahassa Jataka. The middle portion on the reverse side of the railing pillar shows a soaring horse in the void and it has no wings. The horse has been shown as carved in profile and the front and rear legs of the horse are shown as caught hold by two helpless men possibly representing the victims of a shipwreck. The heads of two more victims are seen projecting behind the profile of the body of the animal. The plain background of this composition shows some circular strokes, almost linear in composition. These were possibly devised to indicate the location of the scene in a watery region. The red sand stone panel showing 'Padakusalamanava Jataka' (Fig.30) which hails from Gurgaon, is now in the collection of Government Museum, Mathura, depicts the figure of an 'Asvamukhi yakshi'. The roundel on which this Jataka story has been found to be carved, occurs on a rail post. In this panel Asvamukhi is seen as placing her left hand on the shoulder of Brahmana Kumara in a friendly manner. Both the figures are badly eroded but still the bodily sensuousness of the yakshi in profile can be discerned without any difficulty.

Mathura[^] has also produced the figures of Kinnaras in half equine and half human forms (See Appendix). The obverse torana beam from Mathura[^] represents the worship of a stupa[^] by two Suparnas or Harpis and five Kinnaras (Fig.31)²¹⁰. The reverse of this panel depicts worshippers on horse back, on bullock cart and on the back of elephant, are proceeding towards the site where stupa[^] is situated. In the State Museum, Lucknow there is the fragment of an arch in red sand stone belonging to the 2nd century A.D. This fragment was obtained from the site of Kankalitila[^] in Mathura[^]. The arch is found to be carved in very low relief, both faces being divided by three concentric bands and filled with processional scenes. The procession includes two roofed carriages, one being drawn²¹¹ by horses while other is shown dragged by bullocks (Fig.32). Mathura[^] has also yielded a sculpture showing the Departure of Chhandaka and Kanthaka. In this panel Gautama is shown standing by the side of stylised tree and his mount, the horse has stooped down its head near Gautama's feet and Chhandaka has knelt down to his right. Curiously enough the carver has depicted only the head of the horse and not the²¹² body. Shri K.D.Bajpeyi has drawn our attention to a female horse rider on a dish which he presumes to be one of the

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210. Smith, Vincent A., Op.cit., p.22, Pl.XV.
 211. Ashton, Sir Leigh, The Art of India and Pakistan.
 A Commemorative Catalogue of Exhibition held at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1947-48, Pl.63.
 212. Smith, Vincent A., Op.cit., Plate III, a.

earliest examples of this kind in Indian art. This specimen is now in the collection of Fine Arts Museum of Boston. Shri Bajpeyi has also drawn our attention to the hair-pin of a female head in which the figure of Sun-god riding a chariot is minutely carved. This unique specimen is one of the rare specimens in the State Museum, Lucknow.²¹³ Horse with rider is also found to have been relieved on the belt of the torso a Kushana prince, of Chastana (?) from Mathura.²¹⁴ Kushana sculptors at Mathura produced quite a few images of Sun-god. Some of these images are shown riding chariots drawn by four horses (Fig.33). Chariots drawn by two horses are also noticed on the railing fragments of Mathura.²¹⁵ To Dr. Agrawala, Sun-god appeared at first on chariot drawn by two horses while Coomaraswamy thinks earliest Sun-god at Mathura rides a quadriga.²¹⁶ In this connection mention should also be made of a benign Vishnu Hayagriva belonging to the Kushana period which is collected now in Bharat Kala Bhavan (Fig.34). Horse headed Vishnu carved in low relief within a small square frame in which the artist appears to have given greater adherence to the iconographic prescriptions and paid very little attention to attribute to it any plastic quality. Shri Ajit Mukherjee has also drawn our attention to a Kushana

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213. Bajpeyi, K.D., Mathura (in Hindi); Publication of Archaeological Museum, Mathura, 1955, Pls.18, 19.
 214. Vide Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of India, 1911-12, Pl.LV.7., and also see Vogel's La Sculpture de Mathura; Ars Asiatica, Vol.XV, Pl.3.
 215. Agrawala, V.S., Indian Art, p.258.
 216. Coomaraswamy, A.K., History of Indian and Indonesian Art, p.67.

brick yoni²¹⁷ that was discovered from the excavation at Jagatgram in U.P. which he feels, had some connection with Soma rite and horse sacrifice. And lastly mention may be made²¹⁸ of a female goddess riding on horse back. Dr. Agrawala identified this as goddess Asvarudha, an aspect of Durga. This possibly represents the only stone Asvarudha²¹⁹ whose iconography has been discussed by Rao. The goddess is riding a saddled horse and holds the rein in her left hand. The object she holds in her right hand is not distinct. She is followed by a female umbrella bearer and being welcomed in front by a third female who holds a sacred pitcher in her two hands.

Kushana stone carvers had attempted in carving this animal with greater care than the Sunga artists dealing with the rounded forms and anatomical details. In this endeavour they are partially indebted to the Hellenistic inspirations which were brought to Mathura by the Kushanas from the Gandhara region.

The terracotta moulders in Mathura a little before the advent of the imperial Kushanas, are found to have been moulding horses with greater abstractions. The tubular limbs, comparatively thicker neck, abnormally elongated face, applique

217. Mukherjee, Ajit, Tantra Asana, Pl.43.
218. Agrawala, V.S., Mathura Museum IV, Architectural Pieces in Mathura Museum, p.123.
219. Rao, G.N., Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol.I, Pt.II, p.132.

ornamentations without least care for modelling were some of the characteristics of terracotta horses of this period. An unique example of such horse hails from Sonkh and is now kept in the Government Museum, Mathura. With the arrival of Kushanas in Mathura, we find a sudden change that takes place in the art of stone carvings and terracotta modellings. In some of the terracottas of Kausambi of almost contemporary date, Dr. Kala has discovered evidently, attempts, particularly in shaping horses, with realistic plasticity. ²²⁰ These terracotta horses belong to good breed and are decorated in a nice manner and composition appears to be more sophisticated. Similarly Shri Hariharnibash Dvivedi has drawn our attention to a much mutilated terracotta horse which was collected from Pawaya. ²²¹ This horse is saddled but not harnessed and is modelled in state of slow gallop. Though considerably damaged, it betrays the fact that much care was undertaken in modelling of various parts and anatomically this represents a perfect horse. To Dr. Dvivedi, this horse alone can challenge that prevailing notion where it has been accepted that Indian artists failed to model a perfect horse and to the same author this terracotta horse of Pawaya can alone compete with any good representation of elephant either in stone or in terracotta.

220. Kala, Dr. S.C.,

Terracotta Figurines of Kausambi, pp.54-55.

221. Dvivedi, Hariharnibas,

Gwalior Rajya Men Prachin Murtikala (Hindi), p.43, Pl.49.

Horse in Gupta art:

The site of Rajghat in Varanasi has also yielded many terracotta horses belonging to the Gupta period, sometimes without and on many occasion, with riders. Terracotta horses without rider, sometimes in their moulded forms remind us of the stone horse in the State Museum, Lucknow which is supposed to have been the effigy of a horse related to the asvamedha sacrifice. It is also found to bear close resemblance to the horses depicted on the asvamedha coins of Samudra Gupta. The terracotta horses of Rajghat are mostly of moulded variety with majestic head, broad shoulder and thick tail (Fig.35). They, infact, offer a good silhouette of the animal. Dr. Agrawala has elaborately analysed horses, sometimes with riders and in fighting attitudes which hail from Ahichchhatra of Bareilly district in U.P.²²² In a plaque from the said site we find two warriors fighting each other with bow and arrows. The horses are found to be yoked to each chariot and are controlled by a driver seated behind. To Dr. Agrawala, this scene represents the Mahabharata story of Kiratarjuniya. Mention should also be made of an unique Gupta terracotta in fragment showing the theme Kesi-nisudana (Fig.36), now kept in the State Museum, Lucknow. In this damaged panel Kesi, the horse demon with its uplifted front legs is seen charging violently Lord Krishna. Unfortunately nothing remains of our lord excepting his damaged left foot

222. Agrawala, V.S., Terracotta Figurines of Ahichchhatra
Ancient India, Vol.4, 1947-1948,
pp.152-154, Pl.LXVI.

by which he is seen kicking the animal. Excepting the tail and mane which are schematically conceived, the modelling of the beast is very soft and naturalistic and its eye is very expressive. The fleshy leg of Krishna is also soft and appears to be very sensitively modelled. A 6th century water vessel in Sarnath Museum also shows galloping horses in very low relief. Composed within the limitation of two borders, the artist has very carefully delineated the controlled movements of the horses and as such the horses had to be shown in a somewhat abstract shape (Fig.45).

Of the life size Gupta stone horses, we have so far two examples at our disposal. A 4th century effigy of a huge horse (1.560 x 2.400 m) hails from Khairigarh (Kheri, U.P.). It is one of the rare collections of State Museum, Lucknow. It possibly stands as the stone symbol of the horse that was sacrificed by Samudra Gupta (Fig.37). Such horses are found on some of the gold coins of the same monarch. Sculpturally this horse discloses certain demerits. It is somewhat stiff and its back portion has been summarily treated. There is however, evident realism in the treatment of its fore parts including its head. The eyes of this three dimensionally modelled horse may be described a terror stricken. Another attempt in conceiving a stone horse in the round is to be witnessed in the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Varanasi (Fig.38).

In this figure of the horse, the head is carved separately and was joined later with the huge body. The Lucknow horse is monolithic, docile and submissive in its temperament while the Bharat Kala Bhavan specimen appears to be somewhat indomitable and it raises its head with an aristocratic boldness. The body of the Kala Bhavan horse is comparatively elongated and reminds us of the horse of the Kinnara mithuna figures of Mathura Museum. Plastically inferior to the Lucknow horse, the animal at Kala Bhavan should be placed in the 5th century A.D. Incidentally mention may be made of a beautiful Hayagriva, discovered from Nachna Kuthara in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh (Fig.39). This 5th century damaged Hayagriva is plastically much better, soft and pliable and shows typical smooth Gupta modelling. The horse's mane reminds us of typical Gupta curls and its divine elements include a plain halo at its back and a crown on its head.

In Gupta India, human figures became the pivot of art and with the acceptance of image worship, the earlier types of narrative panels were becoming scarce. Of the few narrative panels that were carved in this period mention may be made of a panel at Sarnath, now in the collection of National Museum, New Delhi where scenes from Buddha's life were shown. In the middle part of this narrative panel a small portion is found allocated in showing the episode of

the 'Great Departure' in which the Bodhisattva - as a small figure is seen riding a horse (Kanthaka). Here the profile of a horse is shown with its rider standing calmly. Bodhisattva is controlling this peaceful beast with a single rope - loop which passes through its nore.²²³ In this connection mention may also be made of the figure of Revanta now in the collection of National Museum (Fig.40). In this late Gupta damaged figure Revanta is shown as controlling the rope-loop of his horse by his left hand and is holding something indistinct in his right hand. What we miss here is the Gupta vigour and grace in the figure of horse that were noticed in Samudragupta's asvamedha coin.

To celebrate his memorable victories in northern and southern India, Samudragupta had performed an asvamedha sacrifice, probably late in his reign and to commemorate this great event he had issued gold coins in a fairly extensive scale. Many museums in India and abroad possess this variety of Samudragupta's coin. The Bayana hoard alone has laid bare twenty asvamedha coins. Samudragupta is known to have presented these coins to his official priests and invited Brahmanas.²²⁴ He appears to have adopted the asvamedha device for his seal also. Rapson is probably right in ascribing to

223. Vide The Way of Buddha, p.28, Pl.4.
Published by the Publication Division,
Government of India.

224. Altekar, A.S., The Coinage of Gupta Empire, Corpus of
Indian Coins, Vol.IV, p.20.

Samudragupta the clay seal in the British Museum, which shows a horse tied to a post in the upper half and has the legend 'prakarana' in the lower half.²²⁵ The obverse design of the asvamedha type (Fig.41) shows the uncaperisoned sacrificial horse standing before a decorated yupa (sacrificial post) enclosed within a platform. A panon is flying over it from the top of the yupa. Dr. Altekar is quite right when he says that, 'The asvamedha coins are among the best specimens of the numismatic art of ancient India. The horse on the obverse looks noble and graceful and seems to be resigned to its impending doom Obviously the best artists were selected to prepare this mould and they were fully conscious of the importance of the event they were called upon to commemorate on the imperial coins'.

Chandragupta 'was probably a renowned horseman and he may, therefore, have conceived the idea of representing himself on some of his coins as riding on his horse and marching to the battle field to win martial glory'.²²⁶ In his coin he is seen as riding a nicely modelled horse and is controlling this walking beast with a single rein loop (Fig.42). The horse is carved on his coin strictly in profile whereas the king on his back is conceived in three quarter profile.

225. J.R.A.S. 1901, p.102, Pl.3.
226. Altekar, A.S., Op.cit., p.121.

Undoubtedly the movement of the horse on the coin of Chandragupta II has been very naturalistically rendered. S.V.Sohoni suggests that the horseman coins (Fig.43) belongs to the 'mandvina' category to which later ideology of either Sun²²⁷ or Moon riding on horseback was attached by Kumaragupta I. The asvamedha type of coins belonging to Kumaragupta I are very rare. There are two such coins in the British Museum and two are in State Museum, Lucknow and in Bharat Kala Bhavan. The British Museum coin depicts the horse as caparisoned and not bare as in the case of the asvamedha type issued by Samudragupta. But two Bayana hoard Kumaragupta I's coins belonging to asvamedha type are just imitations of Samudragupta's coins. Artistically Kumaragupta I's coins are much inferior in comparison to the coins of his grandfather. Samudragupta's horse is graceful and majestic and that of Kumaragupta's whether unharnessed or caparisoned, can stand in no comparison with the former. Even the horseman variety of Chandragupta II's coins are much better than of Kumaragupta's horseman type. The horse in the latter's case have become more stylised and conventional, more ornamental and the artists ~~are not to~~ have paid less attention to its realistic plasticity. Greater abstractions in the treatment of horse are noticed in Kumaragupta I's rhyno slayer type (Fig.44)

227. Sohoni, S.V., INC, Part I & II, pp.4-5.

where artist has brought much force and dramatic appeal in the subject but projected the horse or rhyno or its rider in abstract forms.

The caves at Ajanta[^] have disclosed many events in which artists were called upon to paint figures of horses. Sometimes they are shown as ridden beasts while on other occasion they are found to be yoked in chariots. They are usually richly caparisoned. The saddle on the back of Ajanta[^] horses are made of thick padded cushions with a curved projection in the front. One can notice something like hooks at the junction of the nose band in certain cases (Visvantara Jataka, in cave XVII). Horses with breast band adorned with concentric pendants and tassels or small bells are also noticed in case of some horses shown at Ajanta[^]. Ajanta[^] horses sometimes show bands as passing below their tail. Such devices appear to have been provided in order to prevent rearing or rising the horse on hind legs. The device is also noticed in the Gupta coins.²²⁸ These bands are usually referred to in the texts as Kaks[^]ha while the concentric ornaments have been identified by Dr. Agrawala as 'lavana kalayi' i.e. wooden pendants which are curously enough, also noticed on Gupta coins. Dr. Agrawala presumes that the technique^{of} attributing 'lavana kalayi' was imbibed by the Indians from the Sassanians while

228. Dhavalikar, M.K., Ajanta: A Cultural Study, pp.124-128.

Shri Dhavalikar is inclined to attribute its origin to the Central Asia. Of the horses painted at Ajanta[^] some are of Persian origin and some may have hailed from Kamboja[^] i.e. the Central Asian region. However, if a comparison is made with the sculptured horses of the contemporary period, it will be found that the horses represented in Ajanta paintings are much superior. Their modelling, linear contour and rhythm and their movements are conceived in a much better way than those that were carved in stone or terracotta. Horses at Ajanta[^] appear to be coming out from the background. This apparently three dimensional attitude from strictly two dimensional field makes the horses at Ajanta more living and animated. Artists of the succeeding periods adopted this animation, this living spirit from the horses at Ajanta[^] and the immediate effect of which was then noticed in the Kasipur[^] Surya figure of Asutosh Museum (Fig.46), or Tripurantaka Siva[^] figure at Ellora and in the figure of Keshin[^] of Ambar Museum at Rajasthan[^].

Appendix

Kinnara-Kinnarī, Asvāmukhī Yakshī, Asva-Vyāla and
Haya-Machchha

The iconography of Kinnara in Indian art poses certain problems and its origin, to somewhat extent, is shrouded in mystery. Long ago, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy made a detailed study of the Kinnaras and concluded that 'the Kinnaras in Indian literature and art are of two types: (a) horse headed, (b) the human and bird type (Siren type). Both kinds are musical and may be classed in this respect with Gandharvas. The masculine horse headed type is rare²²⁹ most likely the horse headed type is not Kinnara at all'. Masculine horse headed Kinnara is ofcourse, very rare but his conclusion 'that most likely the horse headed type is not Kinnara' deserved to be examined with care. Dr. Coomaraswamy's hesitant conclusion appears to have been based on certain horse-man types which are not Kinnaras. He was aware of Vedic 'Dadhyañca' who had horse head and who divulged the secret²³⁰ of the mead (madhu-vidya) to the divine Asvins, Dr. Coomaraswamy had also studied the horse-headed 'Purusa-Nārāyana' and that of Vishnu as 'Hayaśiras'. Horse headed divine physicians Asvins came also to his notice. Our learned scholar had

229. Coomaraswamy, A.K., Yaksha, Part II, p.10.
230. Bosch, F.D.K., Selected Studies in Indonesian
Archaeology: vide his chapter on
The God with the horse's head.

discussed in detail about the 'Padakusalamanava Jataka' ²³¹ and Mahavamsa story of 'Pandukabhaya' ²³² etc., and discussed in detail the horse headed yakshis in Bodhgaya, ²³³ Sanchi ²³⁴ and Pataliputra. ²³⁵ He also noticed the figure of 'asvamukhi' in Bhaja relief and in the Krishna-Govardhana relief at Mandor. The identification of this latter relief confused him and he identified this horse headed female either be 'a yakshi or a kinnari'. He also studied carefully the asvamukhi on a roundel of a rail post in Mathura Museum (Fig.30) and another little asvamukhi near Indrasala-guha on a lintel now in Lucknow Museum (Lucknow Museum, Acc.No.B.208). Curiously enough, Dr. Coomaraswamy once also quoted Bana's Kadambari and noted that the Kinnaras haunting the forests are described as horse headed. What appears from the above references that Dr. Coomaraswamy could not comfortably discard the horse headed type as Kinnara, although he had very few examples at his disposal to prove that the horse headed Kinnara, particularly the male Kinnaras with horse-head existed at all in Indian art.

Dr. V.S.Agrawala evinced equal interest as that of Dr. Coomaraswamy about the iconography of Kinnara but the

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| 231. Cowell, E.B., | The Jataka, No.432, p.298. |
| 232. Mahavamsa(IX-X): | Story related in Coomaraswamy's Yaksha Part II, p.16. |
| 233. Barua, Benimadhab, | Gaya and Buddhagaya, Vol.II, Book II-V, p.110, Pls.66(a)(b)(c). |
| 234. Marshall, Foucher and Majumdar, | The Monuments of Sanchi, Vol.I, pp.181-182. |
| 235. | Vide Waddell's Report on the Excavation of Pataliputra 1903, Plates (i) & (iii). |

former has no hesitation in accepting the horse-man type as Kinnara. To him Centaurs, the Kinnaras of Sanskrit literature (Vishnudharmottara Purāṇam Ch.III.43.14 and Kumāra-Sambhavam I, II) appears with horse's head joined to a human body (asva mukha) or a human head joined to a horse's body (Purusha-²³⁶ vigraha) both form being popular in Indian art and literature.

That the Kinnaras are horse-headed and amorous²³⁷ is maintained by Amarakosa (Kinnarah asvādimukha sringārinah). The horse headed Kinnara has also been referred to by Magha while describing the flora and fauna of Raivatake mountain. Magha on a particular occasion, referred to the horse headed Kinnaris who were eager to embrace the Kinnaras human body but were disappointed in kissing them on account of their²³⁸ queer shapes.

While describing the iconography of Kinnara Dr. Coomaraswamy once remarked that 'the Kinnaras are musical type and thus can be classed with Gandharvas and at least in one occasion he enumerated that the Gandharva, Kinnara and Kimpurushas are half human and half equine type. As regards the iconography of Gandharvas being half equine half human types, A.B.Keith had some observations to make. He says that the Gandharvas yoke the steeds of Kuvera which are flying

236. Agrawala, V.S., Indian Art, p.72.
237. Amarakosa, Pt.I, II.
238. Magha, Sisupalabadha, Canto IV, V. 32.

horses; in that sense they are bird like, but that they were originally steeds is a most implausible hypothesis which, however, is not the epic view. Equally, the Rgveda knows²³⁹ nothing of the equine form.

The Gandharva-Kinnara affairs have been tackled²⁴⁰ by Prof. Albert Grunwedel yet in a different manner. To him (1) Kinnara, having a human body with the head of a horse, was a musician in the retinue of Kuvera; (2) Kimpurushas were beings with human faces and the body of birds (3) Gandharvas were beings with human busts on the body of birds; their wives are Apsaras; their chief has been Chitraratha or Supriya and they are attendants of Dhrtarastra, guardian of the west. All these references lead us to conclude that there have been some confusions and contradictions about the real iconographic features of the Kinnaras.

Kinnaras lived in the Himalaya region (Kumara-sambhavam, I, 8) in the mountain known as Chandraparvata (vide Jataka IV. No.485. p.180) and according to another Jataka story they also like to stay in the Gandhamadana hill (vide Jataka IV. No.485. p.182). Mallargiri, Trikutaka and Punḍaraka were also the hills where they lived. Adepts in

239.
240. Grunwedel, Albert,

JISOA, Vol.V, 1937, pp.36-37.
Buddhist Art in India, translated
by Agnes C. Gibson, see foot note 2,
p.47.

music, they could sing and play flutes and dance softly with gentle movements of the limbs. The story about Kinnaras nursing a baby when its parents were away in the forest as told in a Jataka shows that Kinnaras were tender hearted (vide Jataka IV. No.540. p.41) in their disposition. Their apparels emit flower perfume. They bathed in streams, swing from creepers and rested on the couches of flowers. The Kinnaris were endowed with one additional feature when they came to be regarded as protectors of village or field boundaries. Stone figures of Kinnaris were planted in the corners of the boundary of a field proclaiming that these were actually guarded by the Kinnaris.²⁴¹

As regards the origin of the conception about the Kinnaras, there are scholars who believe that the Centaur i.e., the Indian Kinnara is 'another mythological trapping borrowed from the west',²⁴² a Hellenistic creation which entered India through Asiatic west. This assumption may be true since the figure of Centaur appeared in Western sculpture long before it was introduced in Indian art. Horse-man type is known in general to have been introduced by the Greeks during the days of Phidias. Curiously enough the existence of Centaur could

241. Panchamukhi, R.S., Gandharvas and Kinnaras in Indian Iconography, p.18.
242. Inghlot, Harold, Gandhara Art in Pakistan Description of object No. , in the Lahore Museum.

be traced even before the time of the said sculptor. A bronze composition of a man and a Centaur has been detected in the Metropolitan Museum at New York which has been dated in the eighth century B.C. The theme apparently delineates the story of Herakles killing the Centaur Nessos²⁴³(Fig.47). Anyway the depictions of Centaur became very prolific in the 5th century B.C. in Greece. The pediment of the temple of Zeus of Olympia²⁴⁴ (c. 470-456 B.C.) represents Deidamia, bride of the King of Lapith at the wedding feast of Perithoos, attacked by a Centaur. Another relief showing Lapith and Centaur in combat²⁴⁵ (c. 440 B.C.), is in the collection of British Museum, London. According to Greek mythology, natives of Thessaly, the Centaurs were descendants of Ixion, son of Ares. Ixion was engaged to marry Dia, daughter of Eineus. There was a dispute between Ixion and his father-in-law and the former threw the latter in a burning pit. This crime earned universal reprobation and Ixion was forced to seek refuge with Zeus who offered him hospitality. But Ixion had the audacity to covet Zeus's own wife Hera. In order to test how far impudence would go, Zeus formed a cloud into the likeness of Hera and gave it to Ixion. From this strange union was born a monster Centaur who himself²⁴⁶ uniting with mare Pelion, fathered the race of Centaurs.

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243. See, The Landmark of World Art: The Classical World - a Paul Hamlyn Publication, Pl.24.
244. Janson, H.W., History of Art, Pl.157.
245. The Landmark of World Art: Op.cit., Pl.23.
246. See Greek Mythology - a Paul Hamlyn Publication, p.120.

Scholars like Dr. Coomaraswamy, Benzamin Rowland and Harold Inghlot are unanimous in holding the view that half man half equine hybridity originated in Hellenic world and wings were added to it in the Asiatic West. As for argument's sake it can also be said that the hybridity in Indian art evolved in the distant past by the authors of Indus Valley civilization, the tradition of which continued in the Vedic period. Vedic Dadhya[^]nea was horse headed human being. Ofcourse, Centaur i.e., the Kinnara in half equine and half man type was produced by our Indian artists long after the Greeks. Not only the figures of Centaur but in the figures of Greek god Poseidon and goddess of fertility Demeter we find equine hybridity. Incidentally mention may also be made of Phrygian of Niece who stamped a coin a 3rd century A.D. in honour of emperor Gordianus Piu which displays a man sitting on a horse having a man's leg. The legend reads as the horse with man's leg
247
of Naceans.

The iconography of Kinnara has been systematically laid down in some Puranas[^] long after they were conceived in plastic form. Of the Puranas mention may be made of the Vishnu[^]dharmaottara, Matsya and Agni[^]puranas. Vishnu[^]dharmaottara (Ch.42, w.13-15) refers to two varieties of Kinnaras which can be painted: (a) a Kinnara with human head on a horse's

body (b) or a Kinnara with horse's head on a human body. It further states that the images with horse's body should be decorated with all kinds of ornaments, be full of lustre, should be shown as singing and playing on musical instruments. Agni Purāṇa (Ch.51) specifically mentioned that Kinnaras should be sculptured with Vīṇā (Vīṇā hastak^a Kinnarah Syuh). The Purāṇas differ with regard to the proportion and measurements of Kinnara images. According to the Matsya Purāṇa the Kinnaras should be made in navatāla standard (navatāla pramānastu deve dānava Kinnarah, vide Ch.258, V.16) and thus its measurement accordingly should be equal to 108 āṅgulas. The Vishṇudharmottara on the other hand prescribed that the 'Kinnaras', 'Uragas' and 'Rākshasas' were to be made in Mālavīya measurement (Mālavīya pramānena Kinnarago rākshasah; vide Part III, Ch.42, w.2-10) and thus such figures are made 104 āṅgulas. According to the Vishṇudharmottara the face of a Kinnara was to be made as large as twelve āṅgulas. The Silparatna (Trivendram Sanskrit Series, Part II, vv.43-49) lays down that three tālas should be shown in case of the figures of the race of the Yakshas and Kinnaras and thus the height of Kinnara would be only 36 āṅgulas. Dr. Coomaraswamy on the basis of Rūpavāliya (verse 138, a Ceylonese text) states that the eyes of Kinnaras are to be five kolakas, the hair and the crown of them to be twelve kolakas, the neck, the chest, the naval, the private parts, the thigh, the knees and

the calf of the leg are to be made in three kolakas each. ²⁴⁸
Here kolaka probably refers to golaka of the Pratimalakshanam
where the term is defined to be equal to two āṅgulas. Among
a group of copper images set up in the temple of Rājārajesvara
at Tanjore, the Kinnaras are said to measure four virala i.e.,
four āṅgulas from the feet to the hair and the height of the
images was to be made according to the needs of occasion. But
in all cases the best principle laid down in the Matsyapurāṇam,
stating that the limbs be made proportionate to the face
(mukhamānena kartavya sarvāvayava kalpana), which has been
followed in general.

Among a few more texts which deal in the iconography
of Kinnara, mention may be made of the Mānasara. According to
this text the iconography of Kinnaras and Gandharvas are
stated to be identical. 'They are having legs of a cock, the
middle part of the body being human, the face beaked like
Garuda with spreading wings. They wear crowns on their heads
and hold a ²⁴⁹vina on their arms. The passage in the Mānasara ²⁵⁰
has been translated in a different way by Shri P.K.Acharya.
He translated the Mānasara passage in the following way: Kinnara
'is a kind of hybrid being like those of an animal (horse),

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248. Coomaraswamy, A.K., Mediaeval Singhalese Art, Ch.IV.
249. Krishnasastri, H., South Indian Images of Gods and
Goddesses, p.251.
250. Acharya, P.K., Manasara, Ch.58, p.370 (vide Footnote
p.352 of Development of Hindu
Iconography by J.N.Banerji).

upper body like that of a man, face like that of a Garuda and arms being provided with wings, holding a lute, possessing the beautiful hue like flower, wearing the lotus crown, measured in ninth ²⁵¹ talas, made in one of the nine materials, furnished with various ornaments, figured on arches, chariots etc. Manasara, as it appears from the above passage does not specifically relate the equine form with Kinnara's iconography. But a somewhat later lexicon has, however, maintained the equine feature once again in describing the physical form of Kinnara. It said that the Kinnaras were horse headed and are amorous (Kinnarah asvadinukha sringarinah). ²⁵²

The earliest reference to Kinnara theme in plastic art of India appears to have been carved in a Bharhut relief which is labelled in Brahmi ²⁵³ as Kinara - jataka. The relief shows a prince seated on a throne listening two persons, one of whom is a lady. It is not very clear that what part the Kinnaras play in this scene; Prof. Grunwedel who had attempted to analyse this relief, finds in it a pair who are represented upto their knees and they appear to be wearing leaves of trees around the body (parna-leaf or leather). These secondary deities originally represented in the costume of aboroginies of India which by borrowing from the antique gave rise to the

251. Acharya, P.K., Architecture of Manasara, Ch. LVIII, p.67.
 252. Amarakosa, Pt. I, Ch. II.
 253. Majumdar, N.G., Guide to Sculptures in the Indian Museum, Part I, p.36.

Siren type ²⁵⁴ (vide Alexander Cunningham's Bharhut, Pl.XXII, 5).

Horse headed female (asvāmukhī yakṣhīnī) appeared in different schools of early Buddhist narrative art. She appeared on the railings of Stūpa no.2 at Sāñchī (Fig.48), appeared at least on three occasions at Bodhgaya and Waddell found her on a railing at Pataliputra now in Calcutta Museum (vide Waddells Report on the Excavation of Pataliputra, 1903, Plts.1 and ii). Here in all these reliefs this horse headed female is not a Kinnarī but related to a Jātaka story, popularly known as Padakusālamānava. Of the three reliefs at Bodhgaya the first one shows a horse faced woman, evidently asvāmukhī yakṣhīnī seizing by her right hand the left hand of a good looking man from the side of a rock where she lay in wait (Fig.49). In a second relief the asvāmukhī is shown playing a square board game with the man who is now under her control and the third relief depicts her again standing characteristically with her left foot placed across her right while hands remained joined and raised above her head. Her face turned towards the man who stands by her side near a thicket placing his left hand on her right arm and wistfully gazing at a playful boy who figures before her on a roundel of railing post. ²⁵⁵ In Sāñchī (Fig.48), we find yakṣhī asvāmukhī carrying on her left hip the figure of a male child.

254. Grunwedel, Handbuch(Buddhist Art in India),
 Prof. Albert, p.48.
 255. Barua, Benimadhab, Gaya and Buddhagaya, Pl.66(a)(b)(c).

Walking with her burden in a forest indicated by four trees with bud shaped and decorated tops, the yakshī[^] holds in her right hand a bunch of three fruits in her left.²⁵⁶ In this connection a reference can also be made of a terracotta plaque in the collection of Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery²⁵⁷ in which a male figure is shown standing with a horse headed female, both wearing elaborate drapery and ornaments. This is certainly a terracotta version of the Padakusalamanava[^] Jataka story. In Mathura[^] (Fig.30) the same subject has been repeated in stone with greater fidelity to the original atmosphere. The representation of yakshī[^] asvāmukhī[^] appears²⁵⁸ also on the coins of Pantaleon and Agathocles. The story of this Jataka[^] was very popular and survived for a few more centuries and we find the theme being painted in the Cave No.XVII of Ajanta[^] (Fig.50). But the presence of a horse headed female among a motley crowd represented in the famous Bhājā[^] relief puts us in a difficulty for analysing its real identity.

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Curiously enough Dr. S.B.Dev of Nagpur University who excavated and explored Pauni and its surrounding areas, has discovered a red sand stone Sunga railing post carved with a Asva-mukha yaksha which is very rare in those days. Incidentally mention may also be made of Gomukha yaksha, an attendant of Adinatha who appears sometimes with the head of a horse.

257. Agrawala, V.S.,

Bulletin of Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda, Vol.XII, 1955-56, p.3.

258. Singh, J.P.,

Journal of Numismatic Society of India, Vol.XXXIII, Pt.II, 1971, p.11 & p.17.

This Asvamukhi[^] does not bear any relation with the so-called Padakusalamanava and it should be taken as a subordinate scene in this large composition and that is why Dr. Coomaraswamy rightly calls her only 'a forest goblin' whom we once again meet in the Krishna-Govardhana relief at Mandor. Same holds good with the asvamukhi figure who is seen standing alone by the side of Indrasala-guha[^] in one of the Mathura[^] lintel now kept in the State Museum, Lucknow (Acc.No.B.208). Although the popularity of asvamukhi yakshi[^] appears to have been greater among the artists of the early Buddhist narrative art yet the representations of Kinnara-Kinnari[^] (Centaur) were not altogether unknown. In Sanchi[^] (Stupa No.2) a few figures of Kinnara mithuna have been detected. Female riding half man half horse Kinnara and male riding half woman and half equine body were found to have been carved on the railings. The equine figures move to the right from the left and were meant to represent a specific genus of semi-divine beings (Figs.51 and 52). Bharat Kala Bhavan, the Museum of Banaras Hindu University has amongst its rich terracotta collections, a unique skin rubber (or may it be a rattle). This round plaque has a scarred back and in the front it shows in very low relief a Kinnari[^] saluting a Kinnara (Fig.53). The Kinnari[^] has the body of a caparisoned horse and a human torso. There is a horn like projection from her hairdress and she wears a torque and a necklace. Her consort rides the equine body of the Kinnari[^]. He wears a rolled

hair dress, ear-rings, bracelets, a torque and a dhoti. He holds a twig in his right hand and by his left he is caressing her. Dr. Moti Chandra has placed this relief on stylistic ground to the First Century B.C.²⁵⁹ Dr. V.S. Agrawala also studied this Kinnari terracotta plaque of Bharat Kala Bhavan and he ascribed it as belonging to the Gupta period.²⁶⁰ This plaque hails from Rajghat in Varanasi and Dr. Agrawala compares it with a similar plaque from Ahichchhatra.²⁶¹ The Ahichchhatra plaque depicts 'the centauress with a human bust joined to the lower part of a mare, is galloping on a hilly terrain carrying on her back her husband who is a normal being. The male figure fondlingly touches the chin of his consort with his right hand and a bow in the left. Both of them are elaborately dressed and elaborately jewelled. In the upper right corner is a flying garland bearer and in the left foreground a tree growing on a rocky ground with boulders. In putting the Rajghat and Ahichchhatra plaques as contemporary Dr. Agrawala appears to have given importance specially to the saddle motifs which are common. From the middle of the saddle hangs a tassel ending in a knob. On the hind quarter of the horse is the side girth (Kakshabandha) adorned by a medallion (chakra). Our learned scholar appears also to have

259. Chandra, Dr. Moti, Chhavi (Golden Jubilee Volume)
Bharat Kala Bhavan, p.13.
260. Agrawala, V.S., JISOA, Vol.IX, 1941, Pl.II, No.4.
261. Agrawala, V.S., Ancient India, Vol.4, 1947-1948,
p.170 and Pl.LXV, No.303.

carefully analysed the decorative lines on the back of the [^]Rajghat plaque whose flowing rhythm and sophistication led him to believe that the piece actually belonged to the Gupta period. But if we leave aside the motifs and designs on these two plaques, and study the plastic qualities therein we will notice 'the vitality and freshness of expression' ²⁶² in the [^]Rajghat plaque whereas the Ahichchhatra plaque betrays an attempt at much more improved modelling and sophisticated composition. However, these two pieces prove beyond doubt that the theme of Kinnara-mithuna remained popular continuously for a few centuries. [^]Banabhatta, referred to the Kinnara-mithuna as being pursued by prince Chandrapida when they had disappeared on a hill-top (achala tunga [^]sikharam [^]arudha). This description by [^]Banabhatta very nearly approximates the representation noticed upon the Ahichchhatra plaque. The tender love of Kinnara-Kinnari [^]has been described in a few Jatakas (Takkariya Jataka No.481, Chandrakinnara Jataka No.485 and Bhallatiya Jataka No.504). On one occasion a king questions the Kinnara and learns that it was impossible for them to reconcile themselves to their separation for even one single night which alone was the cause of their grief. In Sanskrit literature the concept of 'Chakravaka [^]mithuna', is the nearest ²⁶³ approach to this. In the great repertoire of sculpture in

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262. Morley, Dr. Grace, Chhavi (Golden Jubilee Volume),
Bharat Kala Bhavan, pp.109-110.
263. Sivaramamurti, Dr. C, Sanskrit Literature and Art
(Mirrors of Indian Culture), p.50.

the Government Museum at Mathura there are quite a few representations of Kinnara-mithuna. In a stone relief can be found a male rider riding a Kinnari[^] whose upper part is of a female type and the lower is equine (Fig.54).²⁶⁴ A terracotta round disc at Mathura[^], further, represents a female rider riding on the back of a Kinnari[^] and she is shown trampling a male under her feet.²⁶⁵ In this connection mention may also be made of the fragment of a torana beam from Mathura[^] which represents the worship of a stupa by two Suparnas or Harpis and five Kinnaras and Kinnaris[^]. Of the five Kinnaras, two on the right and one on the left, as Buhlar observes, 'carry brooms and fans made of branches'. Another scholar attempts to correct Buhlar and remarks that 'the fourth Kinnara holds a fly flapper and fifth a lotus'²⁶⁶ (Fig.31). H.Hargreaves excavated a few sites at Baluchistan in 1925. Of these sites, Mastung has yielded a bronze Centaur (Fig.55). This damaged Centaur possibly belongs to early Kushana period; its modelling evidently points to that dating (vide MASI, No.35, p.6).

Among the early representations of Kinnara on Indian sculptures, attention may also be drawn of a winged Kinnara in Pitalkhora which according to Shri Ajit Ghosh,

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264. Krishnadasa, Rai, A Kinnara Mithuna Terracotta Case From Rajghat Journal of the U.P. Historical Society, Vol.XV, Part I, Pl.II, No.3.
265. Krishnadasa, Rai, Ibid., Pl.II, No.4.
266. Smith, Vincent, The Jain Stupas and Other Antiquities of Mathura, p.22, Pl.XV.

holds a bowl of flowers in his hand. His lower limbs are covered with feathers and probably he had the feet of a bird.²⁶⁷ The Kinnaras in Amaravati[^] sculptures are shown in the attitude of hopping on their bird's legs, tray in hand, evidently in adoration to a stupa[^]. Two such sculptures with Kinnaras were dug by Rea at Amaravati[^] in 1908.²⁶⁸ In Nagarjunikonda[^] there is a scene depicting a couple of which the female is dressed to the thigh and standing by the side of her husband, has a horse face. In a similar manner a horse-faced lady is portrayed in a section (right) of another panel.²⁶⁹ These, once again remind us of the extension of Padakusala-manava[^] Jataka story in Andhra region. The peculiar iconography of Kinnara has also attracted the painters who worked in the Ajanta[^] caves. In the ceiling decoration of Cave No.XVII, a Kinnara couple with half bird half human forms are shown floating among the rocks. In Cave No.1 Kinnaras are shown as playing musical instruments. While the Kinnara is playing on a flute and the female one plays on cymbol and they are doing so in order to honour the Bodhisattva. The Nalanda[^] Kinnaras, like Ajanta[^] ones, are 'siren type' i.e., half bird and half

267. Ghosh, Ajit,

268. Sivaramamurti, C.,

269.

Edited Ajanta Murals, A.S.I., p.27.

Amaravati Sculptures in Madras Govt. Museum Bulletin, New Series, General Section, Vol.IV, p.75.

Vide The Buddhist Antiquities of Nagarjunikonda Memoir of Archaeological Survey of India, No.54, Pl.XXXII, a,b.

human. In Nālandā the tails of Kinnaras are given greater importance and are found decorated with stylised patterns.

As time passed by the Kinnaras with half bird half human type gradually became more popular to the Indian artists. But they did not do away with the horse-man variety altogether. Horse faced Kinnaras have been detected in Paharpur. A stone image showing a horse-headed Kinnara pair on the wall of Paharpur as if talking to each other, has been nicely depicted (Fig.56). A couple with human upper parts and bovine legs and tails, standing side by side with arms on each other's neck is also depicted on a terracotta plaque found at the same site (vide MASI, No.56, pl.XLI.b-4). Horse faced Kinnaris have also been traced on the front mandapa of Lakkhan temple at Aihole. There she is shown standing by the side of a human figure under a plantain tree. Her male partner is found holding in his raised left hand a bowl of liquor (?) while the Kinnari is dragging him to her side by the necklace worn by him. Here the horse headed Kinnari is represented as bearing a long shallow mane drooping from her neck and is graceful in appearance and pose. In the Durga temple at the same place we find two life size figures carved on a pillar; one is a human faced male dressed in 'langoti' (square piece of cloth) and bears in his left hand a bowl, evidently containing liquor while by his side stands a horse faced Kinnari who is dragging

him by the necklace he is wearing to her side for a close embrace. That the Kinnaris[^] seduced men of this world is evidenced once again in another panel at Huchchappayyana Matha at Aihole where a horse faced Kinnari[^] is shown with long soft mane dropping from her neck. She is seen naked in an amorous pose and seducing a 'Bairagi'[^] who wears a 'langoti'[^] and bears a rosary in his hand. A horse-headed Kinnari[^] on a pillar in the porch of a temple called Huchchappayyangudi, is shown as advancing in her amorous play and touching the shoulder of a sage. The latter is shown putting his left hand behind her back so as to touch her private parts. The 'Kinnaras, Guhyakas and Kiratas[^] are fabled as inhabitants of the Himalayas'.²⁷⁰ This particular notion had definitely spread in the Pallava country of the South and that is why in the stupendous 'Kiratarjuniya'[^] relief while depicting the Himalayan fauna, the artists had also carved the figures of half bird half human Kinnara Kinnari[^] showing that the artists at Mahalipuram^{va} also favoured this variety while at Mandapa²⁷¹ district we find the depiction of a Kinnara with horse's head with long dishevelled mane. The half bird half man identifiable as a Kinnara is once again to be met with in a relief of

270. Fergusson and Burgess,
271.

Cave Temples of India, p.286.
Vide Transaction of the Tenth
All India Oriental Conference,
Tirupati, March, 1940, p.553,
Pl.I.

Kailāsnāth Temple at Canjeevaram engaged in playing a stringed instrument. The appearance of a Kinnarī has been sketched in Remesvaram of Cudappah district and another one is noticed on a pillar in a Mandapam near the temple of Krishna at Udayagiri at Vellore. Thus in the Andhra and in the South both horse man variety and so called siren type were simultaneously made.

The representation of Kinnara couples were equally popular in a number of art centres outside India viz., in Indonesia, Siam and Central Asia. In Indonesia this theme appeared on many 'chandis' including Loro Jonggrang which is a Saivite complex. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that the Kinnaras worship 'dakṣiṇāmurti' of Śiva. Representations of Kinnaras-Kinnarīs were quite abundant in the art of Pāla and Sena period. The back stelae of most of the Viṣṇu images during these periods show the figures of Kinnara-Kinnarī carved in low relief and they are invariably shown as playing musical instruments. These Kinnaras and Kinnarīs are distinctly half man half bird variety and the horse man variety was completely lost sight of. A huge and extremely beautiful Kinnara of this variety is in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan of Banaras Hindu University. Finally mention may be made of descriptions of Nara or Kinnarī-vyāla as found in the Aparājita-prichchhā and Rūpamālā. Plastic representations

of such Nara or Kinnari-vyālas have been detected in the Main Temple of Ghanapur in Andhra Pradesh and in the temple of Chidambaram where attempts have been made to evolve a form with human, leonine and equine elements.²⁷² 'As we understand', says Dr. V.S. Agrawala that 'the term 'vyāla' is based on deformity of the normal and animal form. In its widest sense vyāla signifies grotesque which is called 'vikata' in literature. It is made synonymous with 'gana', 'pramatha', 'bhuta', 'rakshasa' in the Purāṇas'.²⁷³ It has also been referred to as 'Rudrasristi', creation of Rudra. Mr. M.S. Dhaky who studied closely the various types of vyālas categorised the five archetypal forms viz. the lion (chemaera), the bird (griffin), the horse (hyppogryph), ram and ibex which were retained from Iranian sources.²⁷⁴ Later on some more types of vyālas were introduced in Indian art and their iconographic peculiarities were codified in Indian śilpa texts. Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhara describes sixteen types of vyālas, of which 'asva-vyāla' is one.²⁷⁵ Asva-vyāla has also been included in the sixteen varieties of vyālas referred to in the Aparājita-prichchhā.²⁷⁶ Mr. Dhaky has drawn our attention to two

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272. Dhaky, M.S., The Vyāla Figures on the Mediaeval Temples of India, p.27, Figs.33, 34 and 35.
 273. Agrawala, V.S., Quoted in 'The Vyāla Figures on Mediaeval Temples in India, by Mr. M. S. Dhaky, p.2.
 274. Dhaky, M.S., The Vyāla Figures on Mediaeval Temples in India, p.16.
 275. Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhara, Ch.75.
 276. Aparājita-prichchhā, Ch.233.

representations of 'asva-vyālas' on the walls of the Sun Temple at Konāraka in Orissa.²⁷⁷ Of the two 'one is charged with action and ferocity' while the other represents a 'serene type'. A prelude of 'asva-vyālas' can, however, be traced from a painting in Ajanta.²⁷⁸ In a painting of Cave No.XIX at Ajanta Lord Buddha is shown seated on a throne in 'bhadra-sana' pose. On either side of his throne, curiously enough, occur two asva-vyālas with uplifted front legs (Fig.57). The asva-vyālas in this attitude remind us of the simhavyālas shown in the same attitude on either side of Buddha in dharmachakrapravartana mudrā in Archaeological Museum at Sarnath. In this connection mention may also be made of chapter 230 of Apparajitaprichchhā which describes simha along that of Kirtti which applies to none else but vyāla. According to the above chapter a vyāla is a combination of the facial parts of a number of beasts. Among many characteristics, it is said, the shoulder of a 'vyāla' should resemble those of a horse (asva-skandhah). Thus we find that horse's face and horse's shoulder had their established role to play in the peculiar iconography of 'vyāla' in Indian art.

Reference has earlier been made of mīna-vājī in the Mahabharata (III, 173, 50-51) in which the peculiar combination of a horse with the hind quarter of a fish has

277. Dhaky, M.S., Op.cit., p.25.

278. Griffiths, J., Drawings of Ajanta Painting, Pl.89.

been referred to. Sometimes haya-matsyas or [^]mina-[^]vajis are referred to as having wings. In ancient West, wherever the Epicurean Philosophy had been active, water and its aquatic elements were given predominance as the most vitalising power. Every sort of symbol for water had great significance to them. Thus the tritons, sea-horses, nereids, dolphins, cupids and Aphrodite were found to have been popular among the followers of Epicurean Philosophy. However, we find some resemblances in forms and principle between the sea-horses of the West and [^]mina-[^]vaji or jala-turaga of the Indian tradition. The relation of horse and water in Indian tradition has been dealt earlier (see Prajapati and Agni's story as stated in the Satapatha Brahmana VIII, 3.2.14 and later on also with Aurba's story in the Adiparva 180 of Mahabharata). According to the Mahabharata 1.18.48-53, the Ramayana 1.45 and the Bhagavata Purana 8.8, the divine horse, 'Uchchaisravas' came out of water during the churning of ocean by gods and demons. But it had been a regular horse. The attachment of fish tail with water horse, a fascinating decorative design which early Indian artists, appears to have been imbibed from the ancient West. Although 'haya-machchha' is very rare in Indian art yet they are not altogether unknown. On Bharhut railing yakshi Candā (Chandra) is shown standing gracefully on a 'haya-machchha' (Fig.9). Similarly on a Jaggayapeta railing (Fig.58) a similar yakshi is shown carved on the back of a

mina-vāji. Dr. V.S.Agrawala takes yakshi Chandra of Bharhut railing as a 'Moon Goddess conceived as a yakshi'.²⁷⁹ If we accept this view then the search for a corroborative evidence between the relation of the Yakshi and her mount may not be out of place here. The Matsya Purana and later on in the Silparatna horse has been assigned as the mount of Chandra.²⁸⁰ The echo of the same observation has been detected in the Vishnudharmottara Purana.²⁸¹ The nucleus of this notion, making the horse a mount of Moon God, probably lies in the conception of Bharhut's Chandra Yakshi. The winged horse with fish tail appear to have been a favourite decorative device for the Gandharan sculptors.²⁸² This motif went also outside Indian territory and is found to have been represented in Kizil (Fig.59).²⁸³ The continuation of the mina-vāji or jalaturaga as a decorative design can further be traced to have been represented in a very beautiful way and in a stylised decorative form in the Cave No.I at Ajanta.²⁸⁴ On the ceiling of this cave the theme has been very artistically rendered (Fig.60).

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| 279. Agrawala, V.S., | Indian Art, Ch.V, p.91. |
| 280. Rao, Gopinath, | Elements in Hindu Iconography, Vol.I, Pt.II, p.319. |
| 281. Kramrisch, Stella, | Vishnudharmottara (translated into English), 2nd Edition, p.90. |
| 282. Foucher, A., | L'Art Greco-Buddique, fig.119, and fig.121. |
| 283. Coq, A. Vonle, | Bilderatas in Taxila, See Annual Report of Archaeological Survey of India, Pl.XV, No.3. |
| 284. Griffiths, J., | Drawings of Ajanta Paintings, Pl.100(18). |

The above discussion shows clearly that the ancient Indians were quite interested in the fantastic hybridity of horse with other species in nature. Although the tradition of hybridity in Indian art can be pushed back to the days of Harappan culture but the hybridity with equine elements can not be taken back beyond the period of the Sungas in Indian history. Equine hybridity, as has been observed, by certain scholars, came to India through Hellenistic contact with which Indians added certain peculiar characteristics of their own. Yaksha and Kinnara in Indian iconography are regarded as semi-divine vyantara devatās; they are neither fully gods nor they are dwellers on this earth. They are always shown suspended in the void to welcome the incarnatory forms of different gods and goddesses. The asva-vyālas serve mainly as decorative designs while haya-machchha symbolises the water as source of intellectual principles and sciences. Haya-machchha in Sunga period serves as the mount of yakshi while in Ajanta it was considered as a decorative appendage to a painted ceiling.

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List of Illustration

- Fig.1. Horse, Terracotta, c.1500 B.C., Kayatha, Ujjain.
- Fig.2. Horse in Sarnath capital, c.3rd cent. B.C., Archaeological Museum, Sarnath.
- Fig.3. Horse, Terracotta, c.3rd cent. B.C., Patna Museum, Patna.
- Fig.4. Horse-head, Terracotta, c.3rd cent. B.C., Patna Museum, Patna.
- Fig.5. Horse, Terracotta, c.3rd cent. B.C., Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.6. Visvantara Jataka, Bharhut, c.2nd cent B.C., Municipal Museum, Allahabad.
- Fig.7. King Prasenjita on chariot, Bharhut, c.2nd cent. B.C., Indian Museum, Calcutta.
- Fig.8. King Virudhava visiting Buddha, Bharhut, c.2nd cent. B.C., Freer Gallery of Art, Washington.
- Fig.9. Yakshi Chandra, Bharhut, c.2nd cent. B.C., Indian Museum, Calcutta.

- Fig.10. Male rider with Garuda-dhvaja, Bharhut,
c.2nd cent. B.C.
- Fig.11. King Dusyanta in Kanva's hermitage,
Ranigumpha, Udaigiri-Khandagiri, Orissa,
c.1st cent. A.D.
- Fig.12. Fragment of a capital, c.1st cent B.C.,
Archaeological Museum, Sarnath.
- Fig.13. Great Departure, Middle Architrave, Eastern
gate, Stupa No.1, Sanchi, c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.14. War of Relics, Middle Architrave, Western
gate, back view, Stupa No.1, Sanchi,
c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.15. Passant horse rider, Northern gate, back
view, Stupa No.1, Sanchi, c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.16. Surya, Bodhgaya, c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.17. Surya, Bhaja, c.2nd-1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.18. Surya, Terracotta plaque, c.2nd cent. B.C.
Patna Museum, Patna.
- Fig.19. Rajachakravarti, Jaggayyapeta, c.1st cent. B.C.

- Fig.20. Great Departure, Amaravati, c.2nd cent. A.D.,
British Museum, London.
- Fig.21. Great Departure, Amaravati, c.1st cent. A.D.
- Fig.22. Great Departure, Nagarjunikonda,
c.3rd cent. A.D.
- Fig.23. Bodhisattva's tonsure, Kanheri, c.2nd-3rd
cent. A.D., Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.
- Fig.24. Birth of Chhandaka and Kanthaka, c.3rd cent.
A.D., Karachi Museum, Karachi.
- Fig.25. Great Departure, c.3rd cent. A.D., Gandhara.
- Fig.26. Mayadevi and Siddhartha returning to
Kapilavastu, Gandhara, c.2nd cent. A.D.,
Karachi Museum, Karachi.
- Fig.27. Farewel to Chhandaka and Kanthaka, Gandhara,
c.1st cent. A.D., Lahore Museum, Lahore.
- Fig.28. Return of Chhandaka and Kanthaka, Gandhara,
c.3rd cent. A.D., Lahore Museum, Lahore.
- Fig.29. Human mask topped with horse-head,
c.3rd cent. A.D., Gandhara.

- Fig.30. Padakusalamanava Jataka, c.1st cent. A.D.,
Government Museum, Mathura.
- Fig.31. Worship of stupa by Kinnaras and procession
showing riders on horseback, Mathura,
c.2nd cent. A.D.
- Fig.32. Fragment of an arch showing horse cart,
Mathura, c.2nd cent. A.D., State Museum,
Lucknow.
- Fig.33. Surya on four horse chariot, Mathura,
c.2nd cent. A.D.
- Fig.34. Hayagriva Vishnu, Mathura, c.3rd cent. A.D.,
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.35. Horse with rider, Terracotta, Gupta period,
c.5th cent. A.D., Rajghat, Varanasi, Bharat
Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.36. Kesi-nisudana, Terracotta, Ahichchhatra,
Gupta period, c.5th cent. A.D., State Museum,
Lucknow.
- Fig.37. Horse, Khairigarh, U.P., c.4th cent. A.D.,
State Museum, Lucknow.

- Fig.38. Horse, Gupta period, c.5th cent. A.D.,
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.39. Hayagriva Vishnu, Nachna-Kuthara, Panna, M.P.,
c.5th cent. A.D.
- Fig.40. Revanta, c.6th cent. A.D., National Museum,
New Delhi.
- Fig.41. Gold coin (Asvamedha type) of Samudragupta,
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.42. Chandragupta II's gold coin (horseman type),
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.43. Kumaragupta I's gold coin (horseman type),
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.44. Kumaragupta I's gold coin (rhyno slayer type),
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.45. Water vessel, c.6th cent. A.D., Archaeological
Museum, Sarnath.
- Fig.46. Surya, Kasipur, 24 Parganas, West Bengal,
c.7th cent. A.D., Asutosh Museum, Calcutta
University.

- Fig.47. Herakles killing Centaur Nessos, Greek art,
c.8th cent. B.C., Metropolitan Museum,
New York.
- Fig.48. Padakusalamanava Jataka, Stupa No.2, Sanchi,
c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.49. Padakusalamanava Jataka, Bodhgaya,
c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.50. Padakusalamanava Jataka, Cave No.XVII,
Gupta period, c.4th-5th cent. A.D.
- Fig.51 and 52. Kinnara mithuna, Stupa No.2, Sanchi,
c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.53. Kinnara mithuna, Terracotta, c.1st cent. B.C.,
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.
- Fig.54. Kinnara mithuna, Mathura, c.3rd cent. A.D.,
Government Museum, Mathura.
- Fig.55. Bronze Centaur, Mastung, Baluchistan,
c.1st cent. A.D.
- Fig.56. A pair of Kinnara, Paharpur,
c.8th cent. A.D.

- Fig.57. Asva-vyala, Cave No.XIX, Ajanta,
c.5th cent. A.D.
- Fig.58. Haya-nachchha, Jaggayyapeta,
c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.59. Jala-turaga, Kizil, Central Asia.
- Fig.60. Jala-turaga, Cave No.I, Ajanta,
c.5th cent. A.D.
- Fig.61. Asvini-nakshatra, Bodhgaya,
c.1st cent. B.C.
- Fig.62. Kalki (?), Sambour, Cambodia,
c.9th cent. A.D.



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

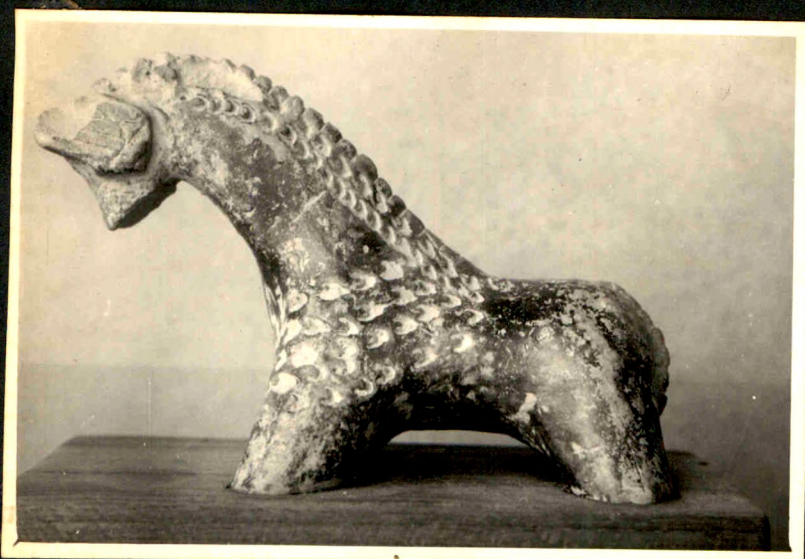


Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7

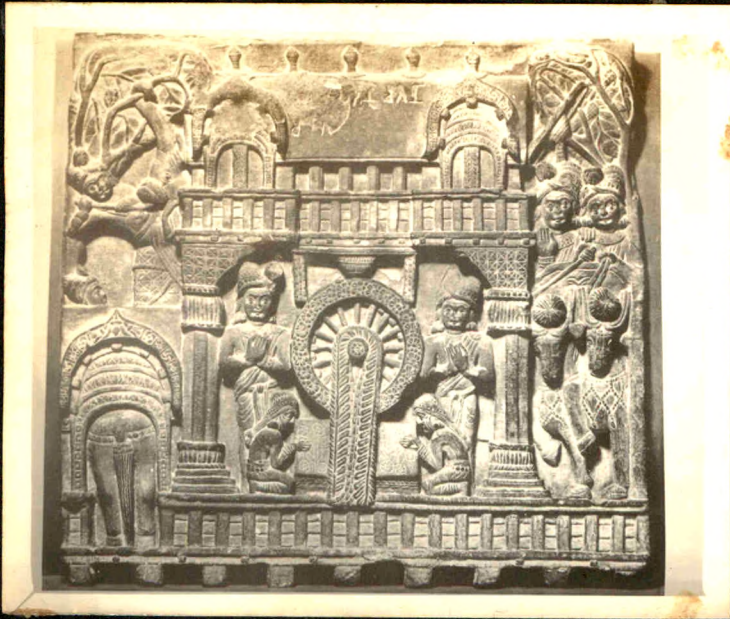


Fig 8



Fig 10



Fig 9



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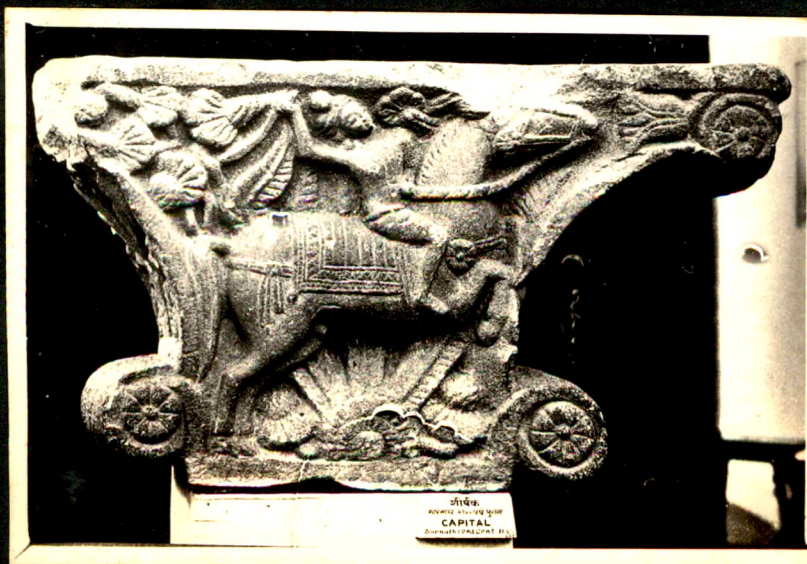


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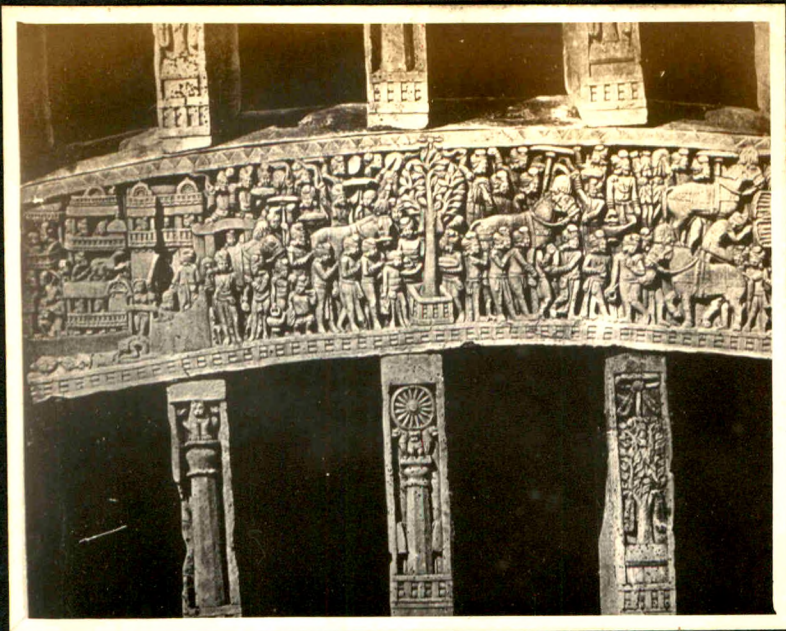


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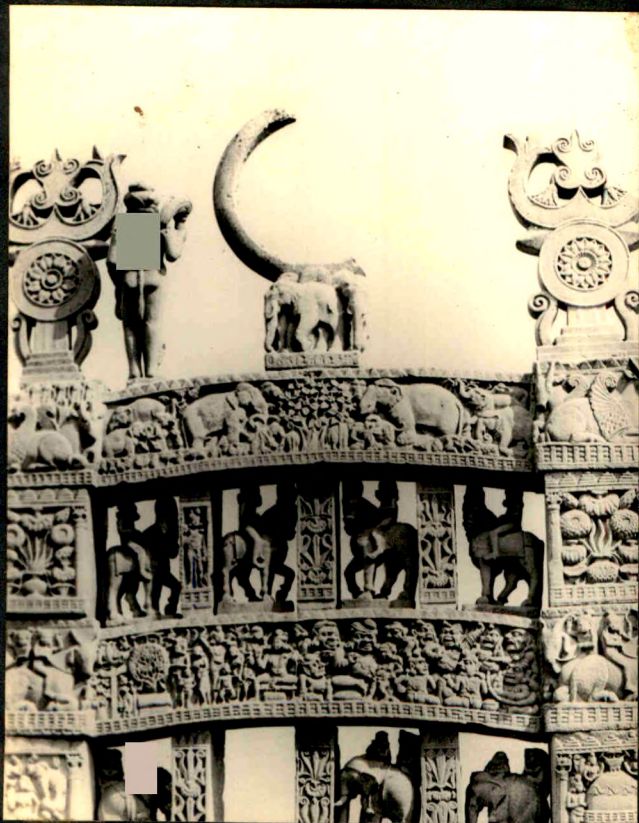


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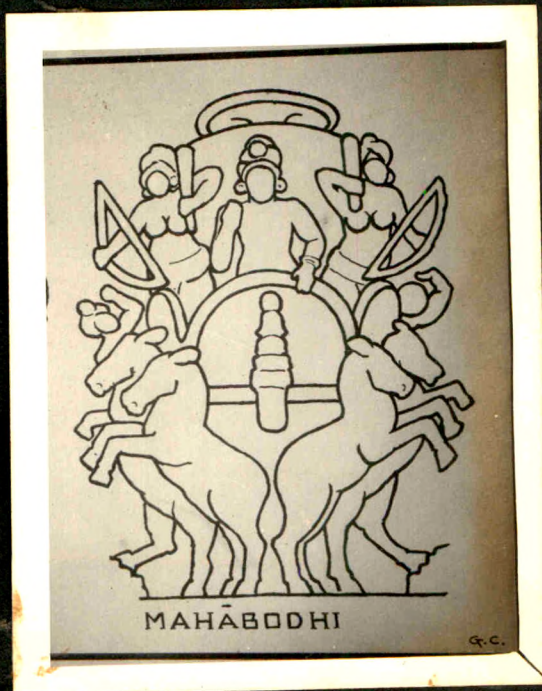
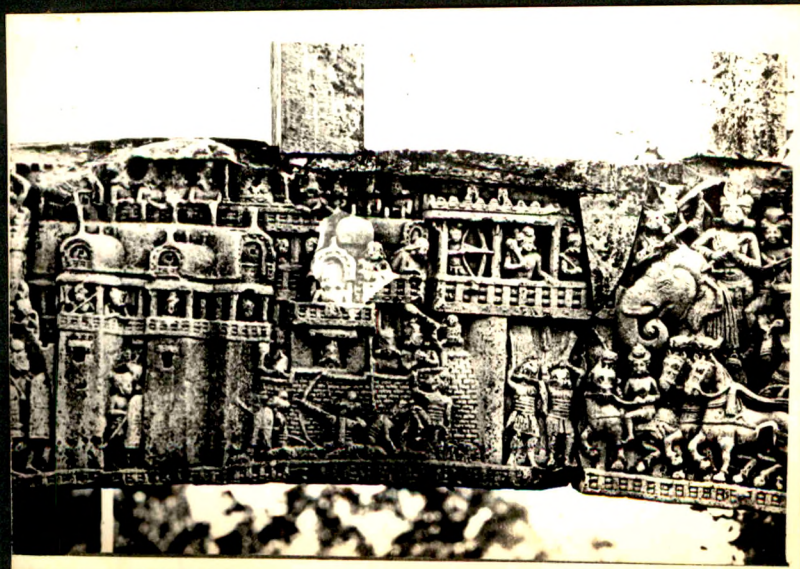


Fig 16





61

Fig 18

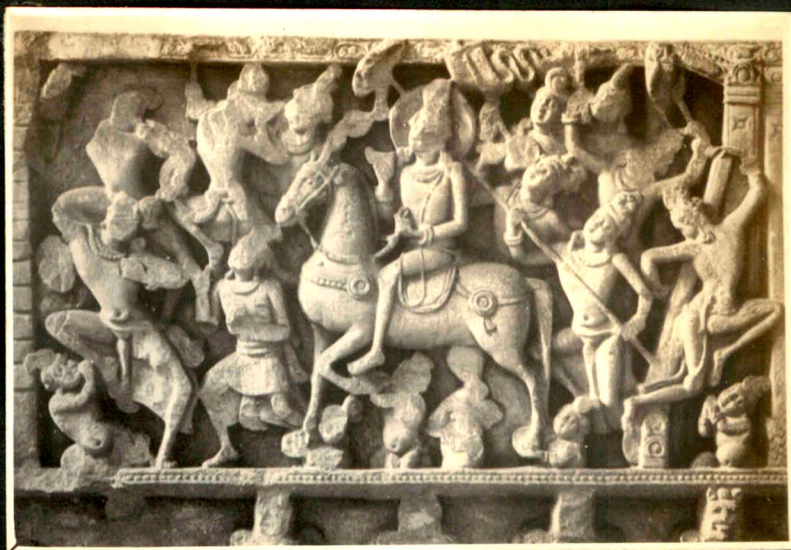


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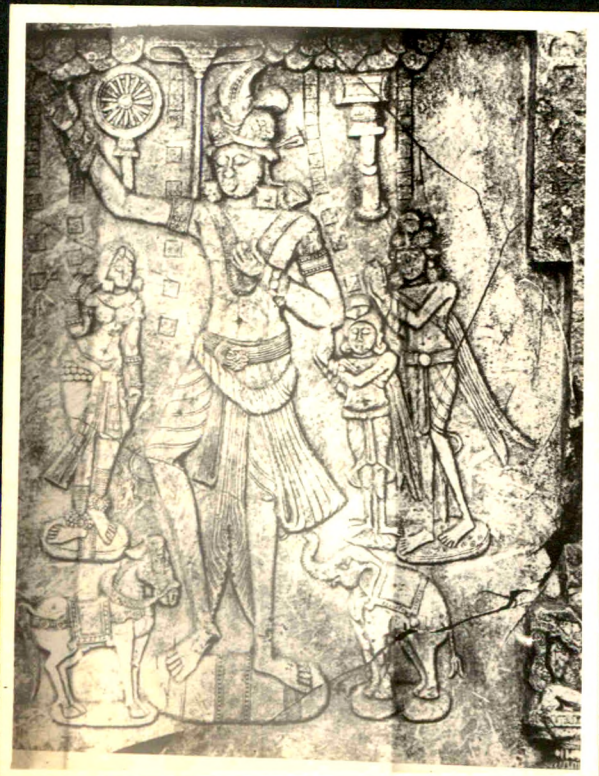


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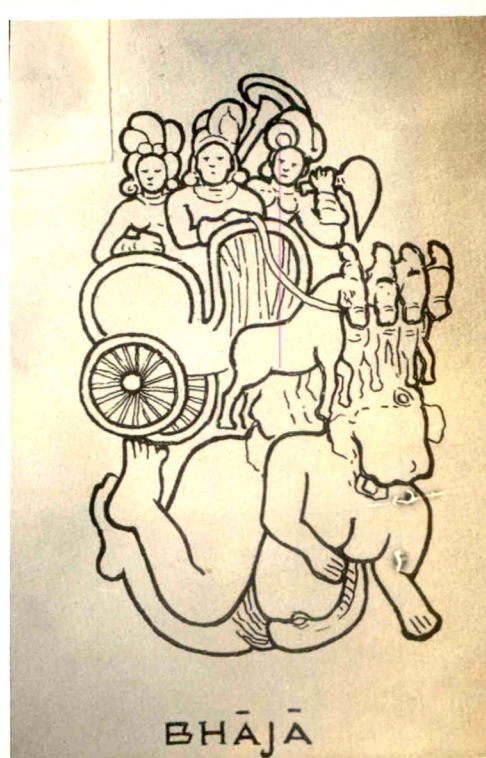


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Fig 21



Fig 24



Fig 22



Fig 23



Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27

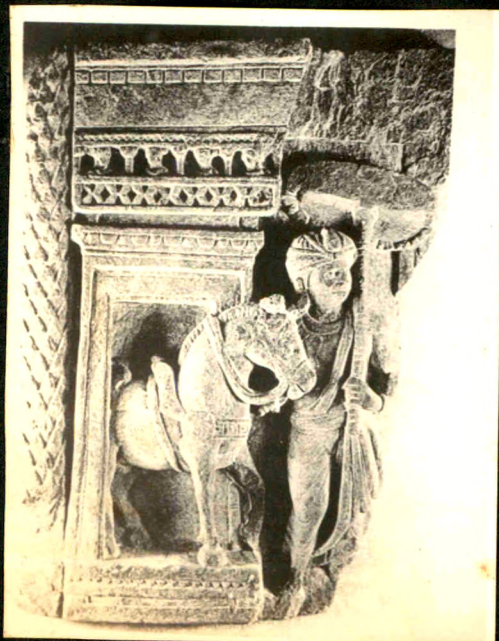


Fig 28



Fig 29



Fig 30



321



Fig 31



Fig 32



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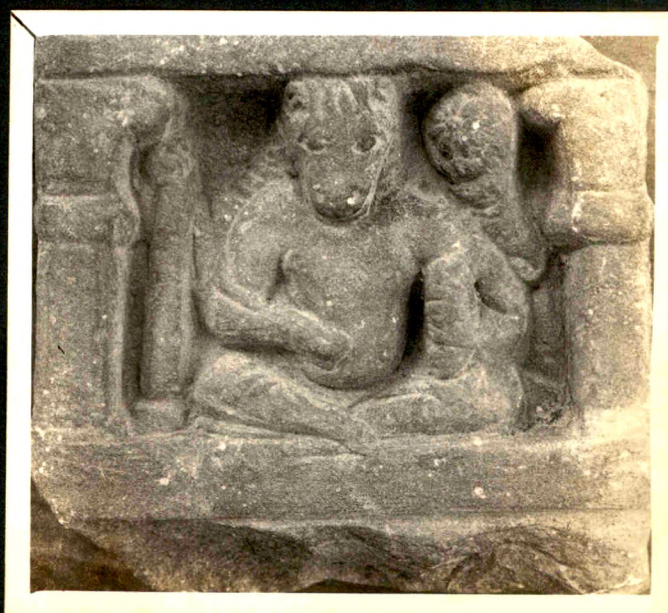


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Fig 35



Fig 36

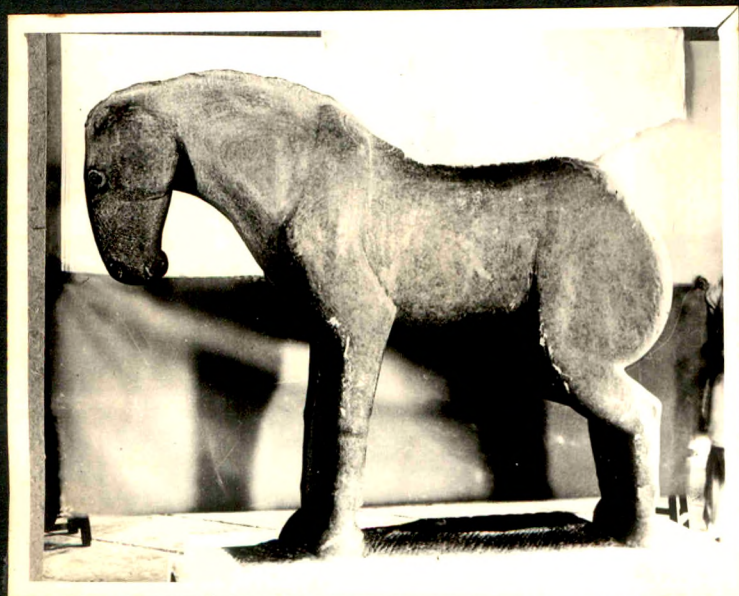


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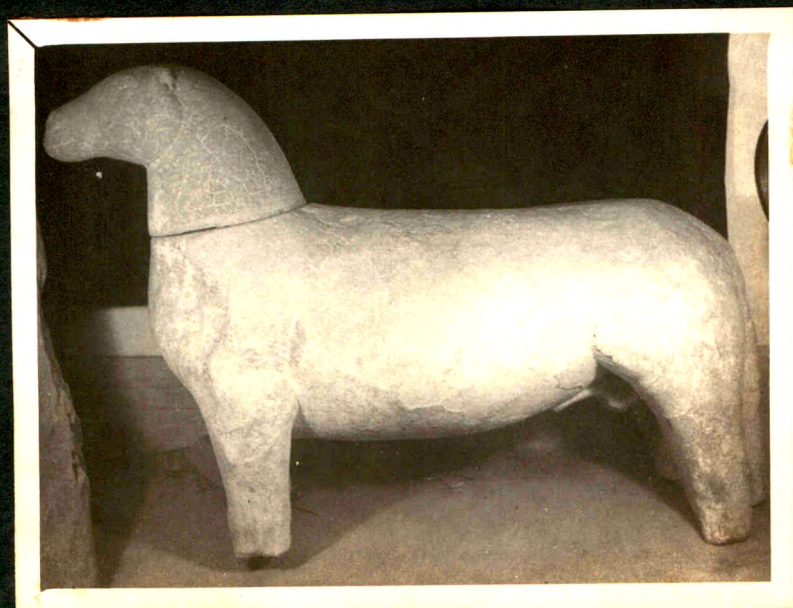


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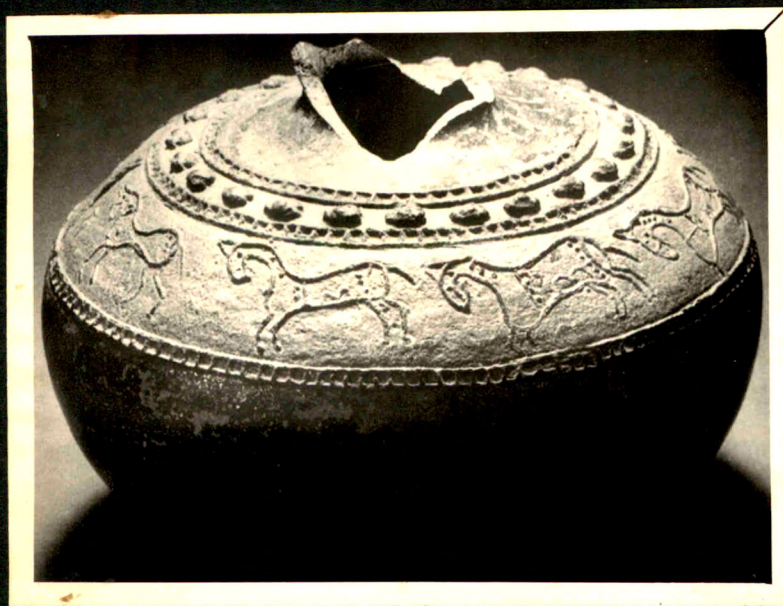


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Fig 50

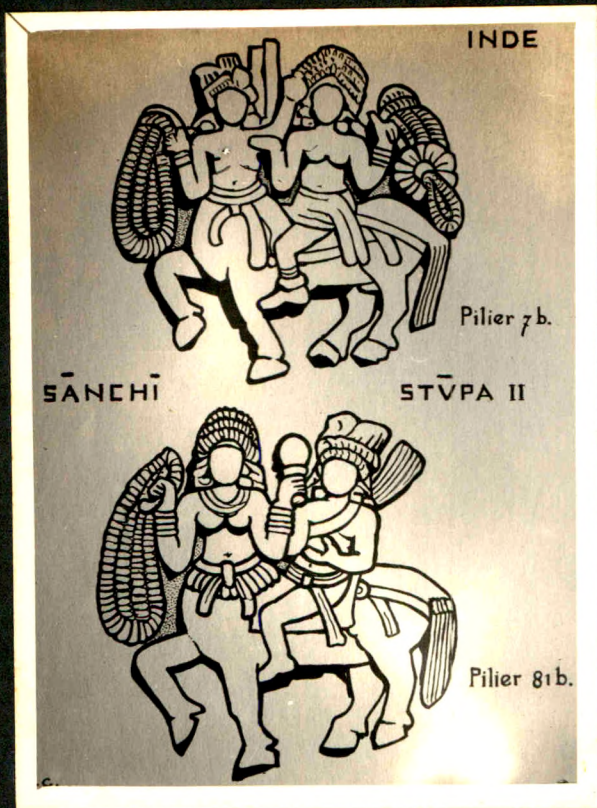


Fig 51



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Fig 54



Fig 55

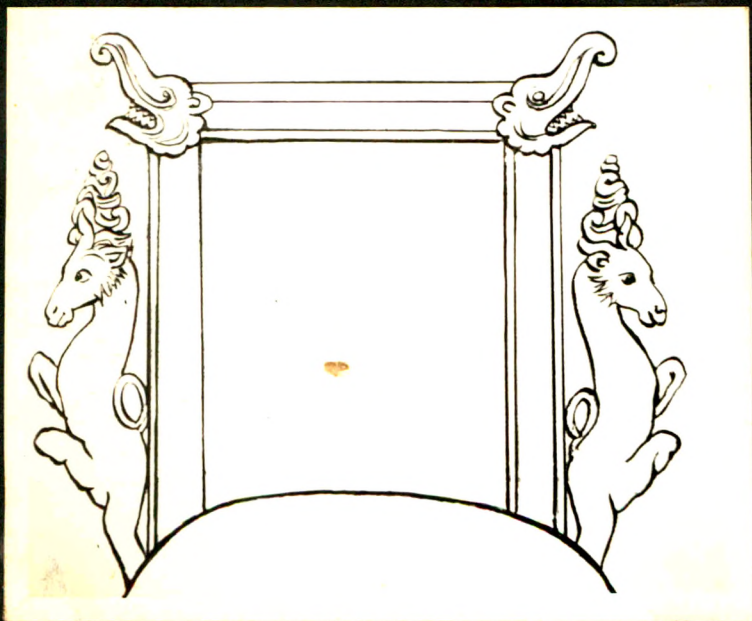


Fig 57



Fig 56

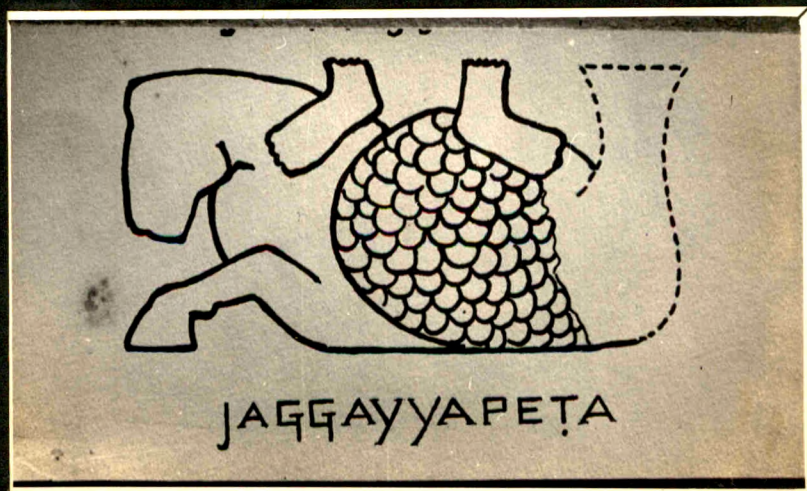


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Fig 61



Fig 60



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